MEMOIRS

OF

A LONDON DOLL.

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THE LONDON DOLL AND THE COUNTRY DOLL.

MEMOIRS

OF

A LONDON DOLL,

Written by Herself.

EDITED BY MRS. FAIRSTAR.

With Four Illustrations,

By MISS MARGARET GILLIES.

LONDON:
HENRY G. BOHN, YORK STREET, COVENT GARDEN.
1855.

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The Memoirs of a London Doll.

CHAPTER I.

MY MAKING AND BIRTH.

In a large dusky room at the top of a dusky house in one of the dusky streets of High Holborn, there lived a poor Doll-maker, whose name was Sprat. He was an extremely small man for his age, and not altogether unlike a sprat in the face. He was always dressed in a sort of tight pinafore and trousers, all in one, that fitted close to his body; and this dress was nearly covered with dabs of paint, especially white paint, of which he used most in his work. His family consisted of his wife, and three children—two boys and a girl.

This poor family had but one room, which was at the top of the house. It had no ceiling, but only

beams and tiles. It was the workshop by day and the bed-room at night. In the morning, as the children lay in bed, looking up, they could see the light through the chinks in the tiles; and when they went to bed in the evening they could often feel the wind come down, and breathe its cool breath under their nightcaps. Along the wall on one side of the room, farthest from the windows, the beds were laid upon the floor; the largest was for the poor sprat-faced Doll-maker and his wife,—the next largest was for the two boys,—and the smallest, up in the corner, was for the little girl. There were two windows opposite; and a wooden bench, like a long kitchen dresser, extended from one side of the room to the other, close to these windows. Here all the work was done.

This bench was covered with all manner of things;—such as little wooden legs and arms, and wooden heads without hair, and small bodies, and half legs and half arms, which had not yet been fitted together in the joints, and paint pots and painting brushes, and bits of paper and rags of all colours; and there were tools for cutting and polishing, and very small hammers, and several old pill-boxes full of little wooden pegs, and corners of scouring paper, and small wooden boxes and trays

full of little glass eyes, and glue pots and bits of wax and bits of leather, and a small red pipkin for melting wax, and another for melting India rubber, and a broken tea cup for varnish, and several tiny round bladders, and tiny tin boxes, all full of things very precious to Mr Sprat in his business.

All the family worked at Doll-making, and were very industrious. Mr Sprat was of course the great manager and doer of most things, and always the finisher, but Mrs Sprat was also clever in her department, which was entirely that of the *eyes*. She either painted the eyes, or else, for the superior class of dolls, fitted in the glass ones. She, moreover, always painted the eye-brows, and was so used to it, that she could make exactly the same sort of arch when it was late in the evening and nearly dark, before candles were lighted. The eldest boy painted hair; or fitted and glued hair on to the heads of the best dolls. The second boy fitted half legs and arms together, by pegs at the joints. The little girl did nothing but paint rosy cheeks and lips, which she always did very nicely, though sometimes she made them rather too red, and looking as if very hot, or blushing extremely.

Now Mr Sprat was very ingenious and clever in his business as a Doll-maker. He was able to make

dolls of various kinds, even of wax, or of a sort of composition; and sometimes he did make a few of such materials; but his usual business was to make iointed dolls—dolls who could move their legs and arms in many positions—and these were of course made of wood. Of this latter material I was manufactured.

The first thing I recollect of myself was a kind of a pegging, and pushing, and scraping, and twisting, and tapping down of both sides of me, above and below. These latter operations were the fitting on of my legs and arms. Then, I passed into the hands of the most gentle of all the Sprat family, and felt something delightfully warm laid upon my cheeks and mouth. It was the little girl who was painting me a pair of rosy cheeks and lips; and her face, as she bent over me, was the first object of life that my eyes distinctly saw. The face was a smiling one, and as I looked up at it I tried to smile too, but I felt some hard material over the outside of my face, which my smile did not seem to be able to get through, so I do not think the little girl perceived it.

But the last thing done to me was by Mr Sprat himself, whose funny white face and round eyes I could now see. He turned me about and about

in his hands, examining and trying my legs and arms, which he moved backwards and forwards, and up and down, to my great terror, and fixed my limbs in various attitudes. I was so frightened! I thought he would break something off me. However, nothing happened, and when he was satisfied that I was a complete doll in all parts, he hung me up on a line that ran along the room over head, extending from one wall to the other, and near to the two beams that also extended from wall to wall. I hung upon the line to dry, in company with many other dolls, both boys and girls, but mostly girls. The tops of the beams were also covered with dolls, all of whom, like those on the lines, were waiting there till their paint or varnish had properly dried and hardened. I passed the time in observing what was going on in the room under my line, and also the contents of the room, not forgetting my numerous little companions, who were all smiling and staring, or sleeping, round about me.

Mr Sprat was a Doll-maker only; he never made doll s clothes. He said *that* was not work for an artist like him. So in about a week, when I was properly dry, and the varnish of my complexion thoroughly hardened and like enamel, Mr Sprat took me down—examined me all over for the last time—

and then, nodding his head to himself several times, with a face of seriousness and satisfaction, as much as to say, "You are a doll fit in all respects for the most polished society,"—he handed me to his wife, who wrapped me up in silver paper, all but the head, and laying me in a basket among nine others papered up in the same way, she carried me off to a large doll-shop not far from the corner of New Turnstile in High Holborn.

CHAPTER II.

MY FIRST MAMMA.

I arrived safe at the doll-shop, and Mrs Sprat took me out of the basket with her finger and thumb, keeping all her other fingers spread out, for fear of soiling my silver paper.

"Place all these dolls on the shelf in the back parlour," said the master of the shop. "I have no room yet for them in the window." As I was carried to the shelf I caught a glimpse of the shop-window! What a bright and confused sensation it gave me! Everything seemed so light and merry and numerous! And then, through all this crowd of many shapes and colours, packed and piled and hanging up in the window, I saw the crowds of large walking people passing outside in the world, which was as yet perfectly unknown to

me! Oh how I longed to be placed in the shop-window! I felt I should learn things so fast, if I could only see them. But I was placed in a dark box, among a number of other dolls, for a long time, and when I was taken out I was laid upon my back upon a high shelf, with my rosy cheeks and blue eyes turned towards the ceiling.

Yet I cannot say that the time I passed on this shelf was by any means lost or wasted. I thought of all I had seen in Mr Sprat's room, and all I had heard them talk about, which gave me many very strange and serious thoughts about the people who lived in the world only for the purpose, as I supposed, of buying dolls. The conversation of Mr Sprat with his family made me very naturally think this; and in truth I have never since been quite able to fancy but that the principal business of mankind was that of buying and selling dolls and toys. What I heard the master of the shop in Holborn often say, helped to fix this early impression on my mind.

But the means by which I learned very much of other things and other thoughts, was by hearing the master's little girl Emmy read aloud to her elder sister. Emmy read all sorts of pretty books, every word of which I eagerly listened to, and felt so much

interested, and so delighted, and so anxious and curious to hear more. She read pretty stories of little boys and girls, and affectionate mammas and aunts, and kind old nurses, and birds in the fields and woods, and flowers in the gardens and hedges; and then such beautiful fairy tales; and also pretty stories in verse; all of which gave me great pleasure, and were indeed my earliest education. There was the lovely book called 'Birds and Flowers,' by Mary Howitt; the nice stories about 'Willie,' by Mrs Marcett; the delightful little books of Mrs Harriet Myrtle,—in which I did *so* like to hear about old Mr Dove, the village carpenter, and little Mary, and the account of May Day, and the Day in the Woods,—and besides other books, there was oh! *such* a story-book called 'The Good-natured Bear!' But I never heard any stories about dolls, and what they thought, or what happened to them! This rather disappointed me. Living at a doll-shop, and hearing the daughter of the master of such a wonderful shop reading so often, I naturally expected to have heard more about dolls than any other creatures! However, on the whole, I was very well contented, and should have been perfectly happy if they would only have hung me up in the shop window! What I wanted was to be placed in the

bright window, and to look into the astonishing street!

Soon after this, however, by a fortunate accident, I was moved to an upright position with my back against a doll's cradle, so that I could look down into the room below, and see what was going on there.

How long I remained upon the shelf I do not know, but it seemed like years to me, and I learned a great deal.

One afternoon Emmy had been reading to her sister as usual, but this time the story had been about a great Emperor in France, who, once upon a time, had a great many soldiers to play with, and whose name was Napoleon Bonaparte. The master himself listened to this, and as he walked thoughtfully up and down from the back room to the shop in front, he made himself a cock'd hat of brown paper, and put it upon his head, with the corners pointing to each shoulder. Emmy continued to read, and the master continued thoughtfully walking up and down with his hands behind him, one hand holding the other.

But presently, and when his walk had led him into the front shop, where I could not see him, the shop-bell rang and Emmy ceased reading. A boy

had come in, and the following dialogue took place.

"If you please, sir," said the voice of the boy, "do you want a nice Twelfth-cake?"

"Not particularly," answered the master, "but I have no objection to one."

"What will you give for it, sir?" said the boy.

"That is quite another question," answered the master; "go about your business. I am extremely engaged."

"I do not want any money for it, sir," said the boy.

"What do you mean by that, my little captain?" said the master.

"Why, sir," said the boy, "if you please I want a nice doll for my little sister, and I will give you this large Twelfth-cake that I have in paper here for a good doll."

"Let me see the cake," said the master. "So, how did you get this cake?"

"My grandfather is a pastry-cook, sir," answered the boy, "and my sister and I live with him. I went to-day to take home seven Twelfth-cakes. But the family at one house had all gone away out of the country, and locked up the house, and forgotten to send for the cake; and grandfather told me that I and my sister might have it."

"What is your name?"

"Thomas Plummy, sir; and I live in Bishopsgate street, near the Flower Pot."

"Very well, Thomas Plummy; you may choose any doll you fancy out of that case."

Here some time elapsed; and while the boy was choosing, the master continued his slow walk to and fro from one room to the other, with the brown paper cock'd hat, which he had forgotten to take off, still upon his head, It was so very light that he did not feel it, and did not know it was there. At last the boy declared he did not like any of the dolls in the case, and so went from one case to another, always refusing those the master offered him; and when he did choose one himself the master said it was too expensive. Presently the master said he had another box full of good dolls in the back room, and in he came, looking so grave in his cock'd hat, and beginning to open a long wooden box. But the boy had followed him to the door, and peeping in suddenly, called out, "There, sir! that one! that is the doll for my cake!" and he pointed his little brown finger up at me.

"Aha!" said the master, "that one is also too expensive; I cannot let you have that."

However, he took me down, and while the boy was looking at me with evident satisfaction, as if

his mind was quite made up, the master got a knife and pushed the point of it into the side of the cake, just to see if it was as good inside as it seemed to be on the outside. During all this time he never once recollected that he had got on the brown-paper cock'd hat.

"Now," said the master, taking me out of the boy's hand, and holding me at arm's length, "you must give me the cake and two shillings besides for this doll. This is a young lady of a very superior make, is this doll. Made by one of the first makers. The celebrated Sprat, the only maker, I may say, of these kind of jointed dolls. See! all the joints move —all work in the proper way; up and down, backwards and forwards, any way you please. See what lovely blue eyes; what rosy cheeks and lips; and what a complexion on the neck, face, hands, and arms! The hair is also of the most beautiful kind of delicate light-brown curl that can possibly be found. You never before saw such a doll, nor any of your relations. It is something, I can tell you, to have such a doll in a family; and if you were to buy her, she would cost you a matter of twelve shillings!"

The boy, without a moment's hesitation, took the cake and held it out flat upon the palm of his hand, balancing it as if to show how heavy it was.

"Sir," said he, "this is a Twelfth-cake, of very superior make. If the young lady who sits reading there was only to taste it, she would say so too. It was made by my grandfather himself, who is known to be one of the first makers in all Bishopsgate street: I may say the very first. There is no better in all the world. You see how heavy it is; what a quantity of plums, currants, butter, sugar, and orange and lemon-peel there is in it, besides brandy and carraway comfits. See! what a beautiful frost-work of white sugar there is all over the top and sides! See, too, what characters there are, and made in sugar of all colours! Kings and Queens in their robes, and lions and dogs, and Jem Crow, and Swiss cottages in winter, and railway carriages, and girls with tambourines, and a village steeple with a cow looking in at the porch; and all these standing or walking, or dancing upon white sugar, surrounded with curling twists and true lover's knots in pink and green citron, with damson cheese and black currant paste between. You never saw such a cake before, sir, and I'm sure none of your family ever smelt any cake at all like it. It's quite a nosegay for the Queen Victoria herself; and if you were to buy it at grandfather's shop you would have to pay fifteen shillings and more for it."

"Thomas Plummy!" said the master, looking very earnestly at the boy; "Thomas Plummy! take the doll, and give me the cake. I only hope it may prove half as good as you say. And it is my opinion that, if you, Thomas Plummy, should not happen to be sent to New South Wales to bake brown bread, you may some day or other come to be Lord Mayor of London."

"Thank you, sir," said the boy. "How many Abernethy biscuits will you take for your cock'd hat?"

The master instantly put his hand up to his head, looking so confused and vexed, and the boy ran laughing out of the shop. At the door he was met by his sister, who had been waiting to receive me in her arms: and they both ran home, the little girl hugging me close to her bosom, and the boy laughing so much at the effect of the cock'd hat that he could hardly speak a word all the way.

CHAPTER III.

TWELFTH NIGHT.

That evening little Ellen Plummy begged to go to bed much earlier than usual. She took me with her, and I had the great happiness of passing the whole night in the arms of my first mamma.

The next morning, however, was the day before Twelfth-day, and there were so many preparations to be made, and so many things to do in the house, that the pastry-cook required the help of every body who could do anything at all; so he desired Ellen to put me in a box till Twelfth-night was over, because he wanted her to sort small cakes, and mix sugar plums of different colours, and pile up sticks of barley sugar, and arrange artificial flowers, and stick bits of holly with red berries into cakes for the upper shelves of his shop window.

I was, therefore, placed in a dark box in the bedroom, and lay there thinking.

After I had gone over in my mind all that I had at present seen and heard since I was a doll, I began to wonder how long this confinement in the dark box would continue. The morning seemed so very long. But twice my little mamma, Ellen, came creeping softly up stairs, and ran and opened the box—took me out, gave me a kiss, put me in again, shut the lid of the box, and down stairs she softly tripped back, to continue her work. The afternoon was also terribly long, and I saw nothing of mamma till about six in the evening, when she came and took me out, and embraced me, and said, "Oh you dear doll! I shall come to put you to bed!" and away she ran again.

About nine o'clock mamma came and took me out of my box. She had contrived to find time in the course of the day to make, in a very hasty manner, a little night-gown and night-cap for me, which she immediately put on me, and then took me to bed with her as before.

Next morning was Twelfth-day, and I was again placed in the dark box. Ellen had so much to do that all this day she was quite unable to come

even once to take a peep at me. Oh how long the dark day was! and how tired I felt of it! However, I was obliged to be as patient as I could, and tried to amuse myself with my own thoughts and recollections.

I called to mind the poor dusky room where I was manufactured and born, with its three beds upon the floor on one side, and the long work-bench at the other, and all the strange shadows of the dolls upon the walls by candle-light; dozens of funny shadows cast from the dolls that hung upon the lines or stood upon the beams. And when the candle was moved about these shadows danced. I also recollected many conversations that had taken place between the celebrated Mr Sprat and his wife, when the children were asleep and the candle was out, as to how they should be able to afford an apple-pie for dinner next Sunday week, which was the little man's birthday. Then I recollected the many cold dark nights, and days almost as dull, which I had passed in the box at the doll shop, before by a lucky accident, I was moved to an upright position on the top of the shelf. After that I went over in my mind all the pretty stories and other books that had been read by Emmy in the shop.

This made me happier ; yet I could not forget the many dark days and nights in the box. Nor did I consider my present condition better, and felt sadly impatient at being thus shut up in a small box, and quite alone besides, without another doll to whisper a word to.

I had just begun to get very sad, when suddenly I heard the sound of little feet tripping over the floor ; the lid of my box was opened, and I saw a beautiful fairy standing over me ! I was taken out by a pair of soft warm hands, and who should it be but my mamma, dressed all in white, with silver bracelets, and roses in her hair, and a bit of most beautiful violet tinsel stuck upon the breast of her frock ! "Come !" cried she, clasping me in her arms, "come down stairs with me, you poppet ! you shall come with me, Maria, and see Twelfth-night !"

Out of the room she ran with me, and down stairs ! The staircase was all lighted with gas ! I was going to see Twelfth-night ! and I had that instant been christened, and my name was Maria Poppet ! Oh how delighted I felt ! I tried to jump out of mamma's arms, I was so pleased—but I could not ; and this was fortunate, because per-

haps I could not have jumped back again. But I felt *so* happy!

She ran straight with me into the very shop itself —the fine front shop with All the Cakes! How shall I describe it? How shall I tell the effect it had upon me? Oh, it is impossible. I fainted away.

When I came to my senses I found that my mamma had placed me upright between two tall, round glass jars, one full of glittering barley-sugar sticks twisted, and the other full of large sugar plums of all colours; and I was close behind the counter where she stood to serve. I saw nothing else distinctly, my eyes were so dazzled, and so indeed were all my senses. Amidst a blaze of gas, crowded with immense cakes, the round white sugar island of each being covered with its extraordinary inhabitants, there was the front window in all its glory! Scenes in eastern countries, with elephants and dromedaries and great palm trees (the names of all which my mamma told me afterwards), and negro people and tigers sitting under orange trees; and scenes in northern countries, where all is snow and frost and tall rocks of ice, and bears walking round broken ships; and scenes in delight-

ful countries, where the weather is so beautiful, and where people play guitars and sing all day and half the night, too, in groves and gardens; and scenes in many parts of England where the fields are so very green, and the daisies and buttercups in such thousands and thousands; and wonderful scenes in no country ever yet discovered, but which were all once to be seen in fairy-land, if anybody could find them; these and many more things were all upon the tops of the large cakes in the lower part of the window, together with sprigs of holly, oh, so full of bright red berries!—and here and there shining blanc-mange and jellies in the shape of baskets of fruit and flowers, and three round glass bowls full of gold and silver fish, who constantly moved round, staring, with their noses pushing against the glass, in imitation of a crowd of children outside the shop window, who were all staring and pushing their noses against the glass in just the same way. There was a shelf which ran across the middle of the window, close to the front, and this was also thick with cakes of a smaller sort, and all covered with Twelfth-night characters, in coloured sugar; but what they were it was impossible to see for the glitter of the beautiful barley-sugar sticks that were

piled up in round glass jars, across and across, and standing between the cakes. There were also cakes on a top shelf, near the top of the window, but here scarcely anything could be seen for the blaze of the gas.

In the shop itself there was continually a crowd coming in to buy cakes or other things, for the counter was also covered with delightful wonders, and the old gentleman pastry-cook and great cake-maker himself walked about in the middle of the shop, dressed in his best, with a large red rose in the button-hole of his coat, smiling and rubbing his hands together, and chatting with all the children that came in, and sometimes going to the door and giving a handful of sugar plums to children outside who had no money to buy anything. But behind the counter there were his grown-up niece, and the pretty girl who served in the shop, and his grand-daughter, who was my mamma; and all of these were dressed in white muslin, with borders of lace and bright ribbons. His niece, however, was the most like a princess, for she had a blue satin turban on, with feathers hanging down over one side, and a silk scarf with gold fringe edges, and a red cornelian necklace, with beads as large as turnip radishes.

I bore all this extraordinary scene as long as I could, until at last, out of too much happiness, I was unable to endure it any longer, and then something happened to me. I felt my eyes twink and twitch and wink, and feel a little sore; and without knowing it, or knowing anything, except that I was in a state of the most indescribable happiness, I fell fast asleep.

CHAPTER IV.

THE LITTLE MILLINERS.

My life at the pastrycook's passed in a very pleasant manner; but not because of the cakes or pastry. For, in the first place, every night was not like Twelfth-night; and as for the pastry, though I was delighted to see it for some time, and to notice how much it was admired and longed for, yet in the course of a few weeks I had seen so many little girls and boys make themselves unwell by eating too many raspberry tarts and cheesecakes, that I almost ceased to take any farther interest in those things. My eyes were constantly employed in observing the different people who came in and out, or passed by the door or window; my eyes were constantly attentive to all that was said; and my mind was busily engaged in thinking over all I had

seen, and all I had heard, both spoken and read from books, ever since I was a doll. By these means I advanced my education very much, because my memory became stronger by practice, and my understanding was improved by this habit of thinking over everything to myself. I believe no doll ever lived who was more anxious to learn and know about all sorts of things—good, pretty, or wonderful—than I was.

I soon had an opportunity of seeing a very different set of things from the cakes, and tarts, and buns, and sugar plums. We left our abode at the pastry-cook's. Ellen Plummy was sent to be a milliner to her aunt, who employed a great number of girls in making ladies' dresses. Ellen was only seven years old, and she cried at leaving her kind grandfather's; but he kissed her, and told her he knew it would be best for her, so she dried her eyes and tried to look cheerful: and her brother Thomas carried her little grey box. She carried me herself in her arms.

Her Aunt Sharpshins was a very tall, thin, pale-faced woman, who was always dressed in a long gown made close up to the throat, of the colour of old nankeen, with a faded bed-furniture pattern round the hem at the bottom. She had a nose like

a parrot's beak, and always spoke through it. She kept fifteen little milliner girls in the house, who were her apprentices, and obliged to work as long as she pleased. The youngest was about ten years of age; her name was Nanny Bell, and she and my mamma Ellen became great friends directly.

Now this tall Aunt Sharpshins, with the parrot's nose, made her fifteen little milliners all work together in the same room, all seated upon small chairs without backs, so that they could not lean backward to rest themselves. And she made them work the whole day, from six o'clock in the morning till eight o'clock at night, with only about half an hour's rest at one o'clock, when they were all called down stairs to dinner in the back parlour of the house. Some of the poor girls often cried, or fell asleep and tumbled off their chairs, they were so tired. If this misfortune happened to them, Mrs Sharpshins used to given them only bread and water for dinner; and sometimes she was so cruel as even to give them a loud slap on the shoulders.

One day my mamma Ellen and Nanny Bell were sitting alone together in the back parlour after dinner, to talk a little, as Aunt Sharpshins had gone out to take some dresses home. "Ah," said

Ellen, "I do so wish to go back to my grandfather's, he was such a kind pastry-cook; and my brother Tom was so very fond of me always. I am so sorry to be a milliner; and although my aunt says I am to be her partner, perhaps, when I grow up, yet I do not like it."

"But then," said Nanny Bell, "you would be much kinder to all of us than your aunt is. You would not make us work so long every day, would you? and have so little rest, would you, Ellen? and such poor, cold dinners, with not enough either—now, would you?"

"*That* I would not!" exclaimed Ellen, giving me a toss in the air with both hands, "*that* I would not! You should only work as long as I worked myself; and when I was tired, then I should know that all of you must be tired, and I should say, 'Now let's go down stairs, and have each a large slice of cake.' Then, in the evening, as soon as it was dark, and we began to feel our eyes sore with looking at the work, we would again go down stairs, and all have tea together, and after that a dance; and we would dance reels, and jigs, and hornpipes, and quadrilles, but mostly reels.—Hark! Aunt Sharpshins is ringing at the door!" And away the two little girls ran scamp-

ering up stairs; and in her haste and terror Ellen gave my head such a knock against the banisters! But she was so sorry, and kissed me so often to make it well.

Up to this time I had never been properly dressed; for, excepting a strip of bright blue ribbon round my waist, and a small cap of purple silk stuck on the back of my head, I was in the very same long white night-gown which Ellen had made for me when I first went to the pastry-cook's house, and in which I made my first appearance in the shop among all the gas-lights and cakes on Twelfth-night. So my dear mamma and Nanny Bell determined to make me a proper dress.

CHAPTER V.

MY FIRST FROCK AND TROUSERS.

There were plenty of little odds and ends of silks, and stuffs, and velvets, and muslins, which Ellen had already collected, and which her aunt had told her she might have; and with these they knew they could make me a beautiful dress. They finished their dinner as fast as possible, and ran up stairs again, in order to be alone for this pleasant work.

They accordingly began by carefully measuring me round the waist and round the shoulders; and then across the back down to the waist, measuring from the right shoulder crossing down to the middle of the left side, and from the left shoulder across to the middle of the right side. Their little fingers were busy about me in all directions: they did so tickle me!

Then they measured my arms; first from the top of the shoulder to the elbow when bent, and next from the tip of the elbow to the wrist. Lastly, they measured me from the back of my neck down to the middle of the waist, just where there is, or ought to be, the most bend in a doll's back; and from this they measured for the skirt right down below my knees, and for the trousers they measured down as low as my ankles.

But how were these two little girls to find time to do all this work for me? The whole day they were engaged, from six o'clock in the morning till bed time. So, as it was now summer, and quite light at five o'clock, Ellen and Nanny both determined to get up at that time, and thus have an hour every morning to themselves, in order to make me a frock and trousers. And they calculated that by doing this for a week, they could easily finish the task they had set themselves.

But the poor little girls had to work so hard for more than thirteen hours every day, that neither of them could awake in time. After several mornings, however, Ellen did manage to wake up enough to speak, and call Nanny; and Nanny woke up enough just to answer. After which

down sunk their cheeks upon the pillow, and they were fast asleep in a moment.

The next morning Nanny Bell called Ellen at about half-past five o'clock, and Ellen made a great effort, and sat up in bed with her eyes shut. At last she half opened one eye, and then she saw poor Nanny as fast asleep again as if she had never called her. So, back fell Ellen upon her pillow.

Now, for several nights they both made great resolutions before they went to sleep; but when the morning came they could not keep them, though they tried very much to do so; and one morning Ellen, directly that Nanny called her, rolled herself out of bed upon the floor. But there she lay, and when the other girls were going past the door to their work at six o'clock, and came in to see if Ellen and Nanny were dressed, there they found Ellen fast asleep upon the floor in her night-gown.

Something, however, happened in consequence of this. Ellen had caught a bad cold and sore throat with sleeping upon the floor, and the doctor said she must remain in bed for two days to get rid of it. Ellen was, therefore, sent to bed again soon after dinner, and as it was necessary that somebody should be with her to give her medicine,

or barley water to drink, Nanny Bell was chosen by her own request. Here was a chance! Now was the time to work at my frock and trousers.

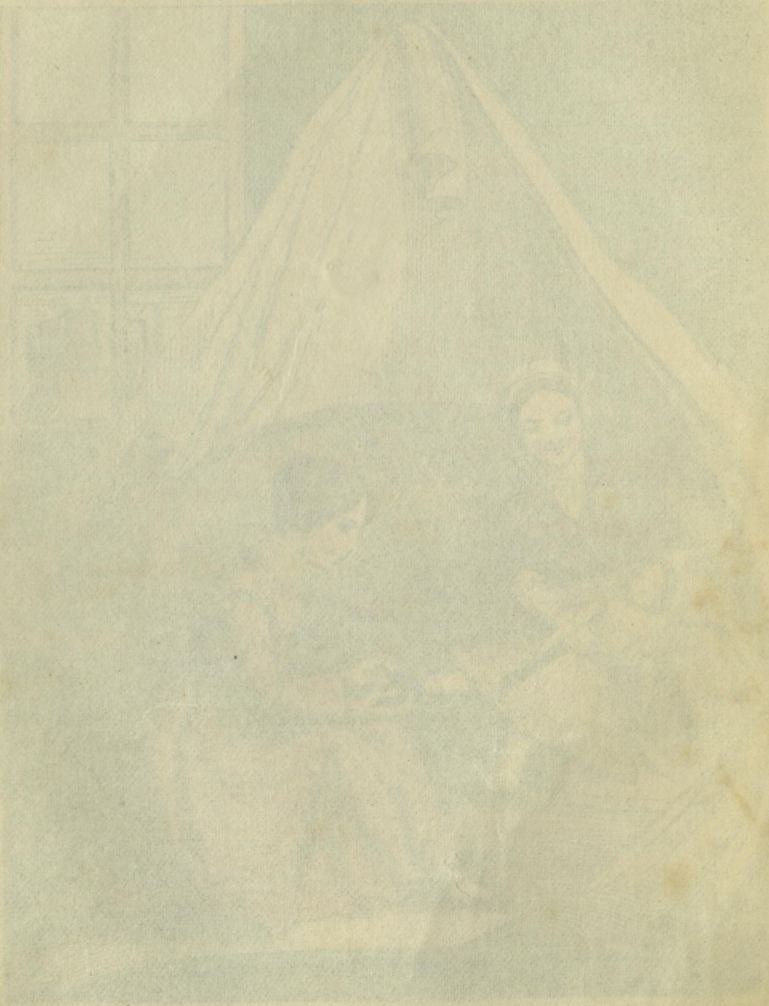
But there was something to be done first. There was physic to be taken. It was brought by Aunt Sharpshins in a tea-cup, and it had a dark red and yellow colour, and oh, such a strong smell! Poor Ellen looked at her aunt so pitifully, as much as to say "Must I really take this nasty physic?" —then she looked into the tea-cup, and made a face—then she looked round the room making the same face, only sadder—then she gave a little frown as much as to say "Why should I be afraid? I know it is good for me—I am determined to take it!" then she shut her eyes—put the tea-cup to her lips—and down went the physic!

As soon as Mrs. Sharpshins left them, Nanny produced some sugar plums out of a little paper for Ellen to take after her medicine; and as they ate the sugar plums, Nanny laughed at the horrid faces my mamma had made before she took her physic and just after it was down, and then they both laughed very much.

Ellen now sat up in bed, and Nanny helped her to prop herself up with pillows at her back, and covered her shoulders with a large shawl. Nanny

Nanny then brought all the bits of muslin, and silk and stuffs, and velvet, together with a pair of scissors, and needles and thread, and spread them out upon the quilt before Ellen. I was placed on the bed beside her with my head raised high, so that I might see them working. When all was ready, Nanny got upon the bed and sat down opposite to Ellen, and to work they both went.

The measurements had already been made, and the slips of paper with the marks were laid upon the quilt. Then they began cutting out. First they cut out my under-clothes, and these were all of cambric muslin, which they said was necessary, in order to be soft to the skin of such a little creature as I was. I could not help laughing to myself when I heard them say this, because I was made all of wood, and my skin was only the fine hard polished varnish of the celebrated Mr Sprat. I was not quite so tender as they fancied. They next cut me out a small under-bodice of white jean instead of stays. Then came the trousers, which were cut long, and full, and were of soft white muslin trimmed with lace work. Then they cut out a petticoat of fine cambric muslin, the body quite tight and the skirt very full all round. My frock was made to fit closely to the shape, but not too tight. It was of



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fine lemon-coloured merino, with a sash of violet-coloured velvet, and very full in the skirt, and they said it must have some stiff muslin inside the hem to make it set out, and not hang too loosely in the folds.

When all was cut out and arranged, my mamma and Nanny both went to work with their needles, and they worked all the day as long as they could see. The under-clothes and the trousers were all quite finished, and the body and one sleeve of the frock was begun.

The next morning, after my mamma had taken her medicine and made the same horrid face as before, only not quite so bad this time, they went to work again. But this second morning the weather was not so warm as the day before, so Nanny went to the bed of one of the other girls and took off the top sheet, and tied up a bit of it in the middle with a long and strong tape in a strong knot, and then with a chair upon the bed she managed to tie the other end to a nail in the wall just over the head of the bed: she then spread out all the sheet that hung down so as to cover them both in, like a little tent. And in this pleasant manner they worked all the second day, by which time my frock was quite finished.

Besides this they had made me a pair of silk stockings, which were sewed upon my legs to make them fit better; and as I was naturally from my birth rather stiff in the ankles and instep, they made the stockings without feet, but sewed black satin over both my feet in the shape of the prettiest boots possible, with stitches of cross work in front. When all was done, and everything put upon me, nothing would do but they must take me out for a walk round the room.

Out we all got from the tent; my mamma in her night-gown and shawl, with a bit of flannel round her throat, and list shoes, and I walking between the two little girls, each holding me by the hand. But we had hardly walked twice round the room, talking like ladies who are out in the park, when suddenly we heard Aunt Sharpshins coming up stairs! In a moment we were all upon the bed—down came the tent—underneath the bed it was thrown—into the bed we all three got as quick as possible—and when Mrs. Sharpshins came into the room we all seemed fast asleep!

She stood at the foot of the bed, looking at us. After a minute or two she went down again.

"How you laughed and shook the bed," said my mamma to Nanny. "I thought she would have found us out, and somehow I wish she had. I don't like to have pretended to be asleep."

"But," answered Nanny, "she would have been so unkind if she had seen us walking in the park."

"I wish people would not be unkind," sighed my mamma; and then she added, "How dear and kind *you* are, Nanny; and how you have worked for me, and nursed me all these two days!"

At this they threw their arms round each other's necks, and so we all three went to sleep in reality, quite forgetting the tent which had been thrown under the bed. But it was a good-natured, merry girl that it belonged to, and she only gave my mamma and Nanny a good tickling when she found it, after a long search, at bed-time.

CHAPTER VI.

THE LITTLE LADY.

My mamma got quite well as soon as my frock and trousers were finished; and whenever she was allowed to go out with her aunt she took me with her. The girl whose sheet had been taken for the tent had made me a scarf of violet-coloured satin, and a white silk bonnet, and these I always had on when we went out.

In a few weeks, however, I was destined to lose this kind mamma, and become the dear doll of another. If I could have foreseen that this would happen I should have fretted very much, because I was so fond of Ellen Plummy.

But it did happen, and in this manner.

One fine summer's day Mrs. Sharpshins took Ellen for a walk in St. James's park, and after a little

time we came to a piece of water, and saw several pretty children feeding the swans that live in that water. The children had some bread and small buns, which they broke in little pieces and threw into the water, where they floated till the swans swam up to the bread and bent their long white necks down to eat it. Ellen begged her aunt to let her stay and look at the swans. "Look, Maria!" said she to me, "what beautiful, bright, black eyes they have, and what lovely snow-white necks, and how gracefully the breast of the swan moves upon the water, while the necks are in the shape of a beautiful arch!"

While we were looking at the swans, a very tall footman, in a green and gold livery, with a long golden-headed cane and powdered hair, came up to Mrs Sharpshins from a carriage that was waiting near at hand, in which sat a grown-up lady with a little lady by her side. Both of them had also been observing the swans; but in doing so the little lady had at the same time fixed her eyes on me.

"The Countess of Flowerdale wishes to speak with you," said the footman to Mrs Sharpshins. Now the countess was a great lady, who sometimes employed Aunt Sharpshins to make her dresses for the country and to walk in the garden. We went

with the footman, and I could see that Mrs Sharpshins was in a great agitation.

"Mrs Sharpshins," said the countess, smiling, and with a gentle voice, "this young lady has been looking at your little girl's doll more than at the swans, and she has taken a great fancy to the doll. The little girl is your niece, I believe. Will she part with her doll? I shall be glad to purchase it or send her another."

"Oh, anything your ladyship wishes, of course," said Mrs Sharpshins, with a very low curtsey.

"Would you like to part with your doll, my dear?" said the lady to Ellen.

I felt Ellen give me such a close hug, as much as to say, "Oh, no, no!" But her aunt stooped down and looked in her face under her bonnet with such a look! The great lady did not see it, but I saw it.

"I could not think of taking it from your little niece if she is indisposed to part with it," said the great lady in a sweet voice.

Upon this the small lady by her side, who seemed to be about eight years of age, turned red in the face—the corners of her mouth dropped down—her eyes grew large and round, and out rolled one large proud tear. But she did not cry, or say a word.

Whether it was this one silent tear of the little lady, or the sweet voice of the great lady, or the look that her aunt had given her under her bonnet, I do not know, but Ellen, first giving me a kiss, lifted me up towards the carriage window, and gave me into the hands of the little lady with such a sigh!

"Thank you, my dear," said the great lady, "I will take care te send you another handsome doll and doll's cradle to-morrow morning, and something besides; and Mrs Sharpshins, you can make me three or four more morning dresses the same as the last. I am in no hurry for them."

The very tall footman got up to his place behind the carriage—the carriage drove off; the great lady nodded to Ellen; the little lady kissed her white glove to her; and Mrs Sharpshins made a low curtsey, taking care to step just before Ellen in order that they should not see the tears that were just beginning to gush out of her eyes.

My new mamma, the little Lady Flora, was very pretty. She had a complexion like the most delicate wax-work, large bright eyes, a dimple in each cheek, and dimples all over her little knuckles. She had taken off her gloves to arrange my hair better, and began at once to talk to me in a very delightful manner.

We drove from St. James's park into Hyde park, and on our way we passed a very great doll indeed, but looking so cross and black, and without any clothes on. "Look there, dear!" said my little lady mamma, "that is the strongest and largest doll ever seen in London. His name is 'Achilles,'—and the ladies of London had him made of iron and brass, because the Duke of Wellington was so lucky in playing at ball on the fields of Waterloo!" The countess seemed much amused with this account. We met a great number of elegant carriages on our way, and nearly all the ladies inside exchanged salutations with the countess, and nodded to my little lady mamma. All who were elegant, and richly dressed, and beautiful, and in fine carriages with rich liveries, seemed to know each other, and all to be upon such delightful terms of affectionate intimacy! "Oh!" thought I, "here is a new world! Everybody seems to respect, and admire, and love everybody else! How very delightful!"

CHAPTER VII.

THE WEST END OF THE TOWN.

Our house was in Hanover square, a few doors from the Queen's Concert Rooms. There happened to be a morning concert on the first day of my arrival, and as one of the drawing-room windows where I sat with my little lady mamma opened out upon the balcony,we could every now and then hear the trumpets and drums, and one violin which squeaked so sweetly high above all the rest.

At four o'clock my new mamma went out for a drive in her carriage with her governess, and chiefly to buy several things for me. Of course I went too.

First we drove to pay a visit to a young lady in Grosvenor square, and after this we drove to a toy-shop in Oxford street, and there the little

Lady Flora bought me a cradle of delicate white basket work, with a mattress and pillow covered with cotton of pale pink and lilac stripes. She wanted a feather-bed; but they had not got one. The governess then bought a large, handsome doll, chosen by Lady Flora, to send to my dear first mamma, Ellen Plummy, in exchange for me, and also a nice cradle, and one or two other things which I did not see.

We next went down Regent street, and sent the very tall footman with the gold-headed cane and powered hair into every shop that seemed likely, to ask if they had a doll's feather-bed. But none of them had. One young person, however, dressed in black, with a pale face, and her hair very nicely plaited, came out to the carriage window and said, "They would be most happy to *make* a feather-bed or the doll, if her ladyship would allow them that honour!" My little lady mamma, however, said, "Certainly not—I thank you."

We passed the Regent's quadrant, after sending into two or three shops, and then turned up Piccadilly, and got out at the Burlington arcade. But no such thing as a doll's feather-bed could be found. The little lady, however, bought me a small gold watch and chain, which cost a shilling. We then

returned to the carriage, drove down Waterloo place, and sent into several shops to inquire, while we slowly drove towards the Duke of York's column. My lady mamma explained to me that the black doll on the top was once a great duke, who was at the head of all the army when he was alive, in the same way that he was now at the top of that fine column. The very tall footman presently returned, saying he was very sorry to inform Lady Flora that he had not been so fortunate as to discover a doll's feather-bed at any of the shops; so we turned round and drove up Bond street, and tried at several shops with no better success; then we passed again down Oxford street, and went to the Soho Bazaar.

There, at the top of a long room—on the left-hand side—in a corner—there, at last, we did find a doll's feather-bed, and of a very superior quality. No doll in the world, and particularly a wooden doll, could have wished for anything softer. At the same place were also many articles of furniture, such as dolls of the higher class are accustomed to have, and some of these were bought for me. That which I was most pleased with was a doll's wardrobe made of cedar wood, with drawers for clothes in the middle, and pegs to hang dresses upon at

each side, and all enclosed with folding doors, and smelling so sweet. All these things being carefully packed up in silver paper, and then placed one upon the other, were given to the very tall footman with powdered hair, who receiving them with a serious face, and carrying them balanced on the palm of one hand, and holding up his long gold-headed cane in the other, slowly walked behind us, with his chin raised high out of his white neck-cloth, to the admiration of everybody in the bazaar, as we returned to our carriage.

We now drove once more into Regent street, to a pastry-cook's, and there I was left lying upon the seat of the carriage all alone, while Lady Flora and her governess went to have something nice. But I did not care much about this, as my mind was occupied with several thoughts. In the first place, the pastry-cook's window, though very elegant, presented nothing like the brilliant appearance of Mr Plummy's shop-window on Twelfth-night! No —that first impression exceeded anything else of the kind, and was never to be effaced. But there was one other thought that troubled me a little. It was this. I had been accustomed hitherto to think myself not only very pretty, but one of the very nicest and best dolls that could possibly be. I had

always understood that the celebrated Mr Sprat, who had made me, was one of the very first doll-makers in England! The master of the doll-shop in Holborn, who had walked to and fro, like Napoleon Buonaparte in a brown-paper cocked hat, had said so in my hearing; and I had believed it. I naturally considered myself a charming doll. But I had seen many other dolls of quite a different make in the Soho Bazaar!—dolls which I could not help fancying were superior to any of those made by poor Mr Sprat, and therefore very superior to myself. This thought hurt my vanity and humbled me. Of course I had been very vain and conceited. What else could you expect of a doll? But now I certainly felt much less vain, for I plainly saw that there were other dolls in the world who were far prettier and better made than myself. However, as I had been already beloved by two mammas, I soon became contented, and felt no jealousy or envy of the prettiness or fineness of others; and I also believed that if I was amiable, and could become clever, I should never be without somebody to love me.

My mamma and her governess now returned to the carriage, and we drove home.

CHAPTER VIII.

A NARROW ESCAPE.

I had a narrow escape of a most terrible accident a few days after, of a kind which I shall never forget as long as I live. As it happened at the close of a day on which I saw several new things, I may as well give a short account of that day, and finish with my narrow escape.

The carriage was ordered at twelve o'clock, and we drove to the Regent's park. I had on a new bonnet with a white lace veil, and looked very nice. After driving once round the circle, we got out at the Zoological Gardens, and went in to see the animals.

My little lady mamma first took me to see the parrots, and parroquets, and macaws. Some of the macaws were all white; some white, with an

orange-coloured top-knot; some were green, with scarlet and blue in the wings and tail, and with scarlet and white in their faces. Then they had two or three very long, straight feathers in their tails, and they spoke to each other, and often scolded in a very hoarse voice. Some of the parrots were all green, some all grey; but there was one of the parroquets—a little bright-eyed, quick fellow,—who was nearly all red, and had a funny, impudent crown of feathers of white and purple upon the top of his head, but a very short tail. Now, as we were looking at him, Lady Flora suddenly took a fancy to touch his short tail—not with her own hand though, but with mine, which she poked through the wires of his cage for that purpose. "Kark!" cried the little red, quick fellow, turning round very briskly and giving such a peck at my hand. He just missed me, because the governess, who was close by, instantly drew back my mamma's arm, and mine too, of course, at the same time; the peck, however, fell upon the edge of the cage and made a mark in the wood. This was a narrow escape, everybody would say; still it is not the terrible one I shall presently have to relate.

After this, the same little quick fellow pretended his poll wanted scratching, and held down his head

to have it done for him, with his eyes shut—one eye, though, not quite close,—and his head turned rather sideways. "No, no!" said the governess, "no thank you, sir; you only want to get another chance of a peck at our fingers!" So we went away, and then the little quick fellow looked up in a moment with such a bright eye, and cried "Kark! skrark!"

After this my mamma took me, all trembling as I was, to see the monkeys. As she remembered the danger I had been in from the red parroquet with the impudent top-knot, Lady Flora did not put either of my hands into any of the cages, but held me up in front of one of them, that I might see the monkeys. Oh, how I wished for a voice to cry "Not so close, mamma! do not hold me so close!"

The monkey who was nearest to the bars was the quietest of them. While the others were running and skipping, and climbing all over the cage, this one sat quite still, with his head bent down and his eyes looking upon the floor; and now and then he looked into the black palm of his little brown hand, with a very grave and earnest face, as if he was considering something about which he was very anxious: when all of a sudden he darted one arm through the bars of his cage, right at my head, and

just reached my white veil with his little brown hand! He tore it quite off from the bonnet—ran up the wires in front, squeaking and chattering—and the next moment we saw him at the back of the cage, high up, sitting upon a small shelf tearing my veil all to pieces, and shewing us his white teeth, with round staring eyes, and his mouth opening and shutting as fast as possible.

This also was a narrow escape as everybody will say; still it is not the terrible one I shall almost directly have to relate.

We went to see the tigers and leopards, and while the governess was looking at a zebra, we went too close to be safe, and also too close to the bars of the elephant's enclosure, so that he could have reached us very well with his trunk; but none of these chances are like the terrible escape I am *now* about to relate. I may well call it a terrible one, because I might have broken my neck or my back, or both, besides breaking the head of somebody else at the same moment.

We drove to the Edgeware road, and down Park lane to Mayfair, in order to pay a visit to a lady of high rank, the Duchess of Guineahen; and then straight home. After Lady Flowerdale, my mamma's mamma, had dined, I heard with the

greatest delight that her ladyship intended to take Lady Flora with her this evening to the Italian Opera. Lady Flowerdale had often before said that she thought my mamma was at present too young to go to any place where the hours are always so late; however she determined to take her.

There was a great fuss in dressing both Lady Flora and myself, but at last it was finished, and we were all impatience to go. I had on a new pink silk frock, with a white lace scarf, and a lovely bouquet of the sweetest flowers was placed in my sash. When we got into the carriage Lady Flowerdale sat on one side, and my mamma and I on the other. We seemed all silks, and muslins, and sparkles, and feathers, and appeared quite to fill the carriage, so that there was not room for another doll.

Out we got, and passed through the crowd and the soldiers at the door, and up stone steps we went, and through passages full of silks, and muslins, and lace, and jewels, and feathers, and chattering—and up more steps, and along more passages, till at last we were in a little box, and looked round into a great place full of little boxes, and deep down upon a crowd below;—and all the place was full of light, and the same kind of silks, and

muslins, and lace, and sparkles, and feathers, and chattering, as we had found in the passages and on the stairs, all of which we saw better on account of the dark coats of the gentlemen, who were like the shadows of this picture of fine ladies.

Lady Flora was placed near the edge of the box, as this was her first visit to the Opera. She held me in her arms with my head hanging a little over the edge. Oh, how frightened I was as I looked down! The height was dreadful! There were indeed many rows above us, but there were two below us, and it looked a terrible distance down into the crowd at the bottom. "Oh," cried I to myself, "if my mamma *would* but hold me tighter —I am so frightened!"

Well, the opera commenced, and it was very long. My little lady mamma got quite tired and sleepy before it was half over, and continually asked when the dancing would begin. But the opera still went on, and I saw with alarm that her eyes grew very heavy, and every now and then were shut.

I saw in another box very near us another little lady of about my mamma's age, who had an opera glass in her hand, and was also leaning over the edge of the box; and I thought, "Now if that small

lady drops the opera glass upon the head of some gentleman below in the pit, it will only knock a bit of his head off; but if my small lady drops me, I shall be knocked *all* to pieces!"

I had scarcely finished this reflection when, to my indescribable alarm, I felt the hand that held me get looser and looser. Lady Flora was fast asleep!

What feelings, what thoughts, were mine at that moment, I cannot say, for everything within me seemed mingled in confusion with everything that was round me, and I did not know one thing from another. The hand that held me got still looser!

Oh dear me!—how shall I proceed? It was a moment, as the poet Henry Chorley observes—

"When all that's feeble squeaks within the soul!"

The next moment I felt all was over with me! The hand of my sleeping mamma opened—and down,—down I fell into the dark pit below!

As my head was of solid wood and heavy, I fell head foremost; but, most fortunate to relate, the gentleman who was just underneath was holding up his hat, which was a new one, in order to prevent its being crushed by the crowd, and I fell straight into it,—with such a thump, however, that I half

knocked out the crown, and my head poked through a great crack on one side.

I was brought up to the box again by somebody —I had not sufficiently recovered to know anything more, except that my little lady mamma was still asleep, and now lay upon a small sofa at the back of the box, covered over with a large French shawl. This, I think I may say, is having had a narrow escape!

CHAPTER IX.

DOLL'S LETTERS.

I had the next day a great joy. It was the arrival of a letter from my dear Ellen Plummy, which her brother Thomas had brought and given to one of the housemaids, saying it was a "doll's letter." The housemaid had given it to a page, and the page had given it to the tall footman, and he—after some consideration—had taken it to the governess, who, having opened it, and read it, and shown it to Lady Flowerdale, had asked my little lady mamma if she would allow me to receive a letter, as one had been sent for me by the little girl from whom she had received me. Lady Flora was at first going to say "No," but suddenly she recollected the sad face of poor Ellen when she placed me in her hands, and then she said "Oh yes!—I

should so like to read it." This was the letter. It was addressed on the outside to "Maria Poppet."

"My dearest Maria,

"I have never forgotten you, though I have got another doll; and often when I love this other doll, I am thinking of it as if you were this. I have also had a cradle sent me by the kind great lady and little lady both, and some things for the bedding, and a necklace of beads for myself, besides a small painted workbox. We get up at six o'clock to work as usual, and go to bed at nine, after bread and butter. I am so glad to think you are happy and comfortable, and that you have no hard needlework to do, and the little lady is fond of you. Don't you remember the Twelfth-cake my brother Tommy gave for you, and how he laughed all the way we ran home at something that had happened in the doll shop about Buonaparte and Abernethy biscuits? I often think of you. I never forget you, nor all who have been good to me, and whom I love, and I hope we may some day meet again; and I also hope that your happy life among all the riches of the world will not make you quite forget your poor first mamma.

"Your affectionate

"Ellen Plummy."

The little Lady Flora and the governess were rather amused with this letter of my poor dear Ellen's, but Lady Flowerdale was very much pleased with it, and said that, however simple or foolish it might seem, it showed a good and affectionate nature in the little girl who had sent it; and she was of opinion that the doll should write an answer.

This idea of my writing an answer greatly delighted Lady Flora, and she and her governess sat a whole morning thinking what to say, and writing upon a slate, and then rubbing it out because it would not do. At the same time the governess was obliged to put a pen very often into my hand, and teach me to write, and she often seemed so vexed and tired; but Lady Flora would never let her rest, so that I really had in this manner an excellent lesson in writing.

At last a letter, in answer, was composed on a slate by the governess, with Lady Flora's assistance, and then a pen was put into my hand by the governess, so that I wrote the letter. It was then sent to Lady Flowerdale, to know if she approved of it; but she did not: she said it wanted ease and simplicity, and was not what a nursery letter ought to be, nor like what a doll would say. She then

tried herself, but she could not write one to her mind.

That same evening, as she sat at dinner with the earl her husband, they happened to be alone. Lady Flora was gone to bed, but had left me sitting upright in one corner of the room, having forgotten to take me up stairs with her. Her ladyship, observing that Lord Flowerdale, who was a cabinet minister, was troubled with state business, sought to relieve his mind by telling him all about this letter to me, and their difficulty in answering it. The minister at first paid no attention to this triviality, but when her ladyship related how the governess and Lady Flora had tried all the morning to write a proper answer for the doll, and how hard she *herself* had tried, but could not, the minister was amused, and in the end quite laughed, forgot the business of the state, and actually became pleasant. He desired to see the letter. It was brought in by a footman,—placed upon a splendid silver salver, and handed to the minister by the butler with a grave and important face.

The minister read the letter very attentively; then smiled, and laid it by the side of his plate, on which was a slice of currant tart. "So," said he, "Flora and her governess have tried in vain to

write a proper reply to this letter from the doll; and your ladyship has also tried in vain. Well, I have a mind to write the reply myself; I need not go down to the house (meaning, as I afterwards learnt, the House of Lords) for ten minutes, and if I do not eat this currant tart, but write instead, I can very well spare that time. Bring me my writing-desk."

The desk was brought, and placed on a side table. His lordship sat down, and opening Ellen Plummy's letter, began to write a reply for me.

He sat with his forehead full of lines, frowning and screwing up his mouth, and working very hard at it, and only writing a few words at a time, after studying Ellen's letter, which lay open before him.

Three times the servant came to announce to his lordship that his carriage was at the door; but he had not finished. At last, however, it was done, and he was about to read it, when, hearing the clock strike, he found he had been three quarters of an hour over it, and, jumping up, hurried out of the room, and I heard the carriage drive off at a great rate.

Lady Flowerdale, with a face of smiling curiosity, told one of the footmen to bring her what his lordship had been writing. She cast her eyes over it,

laid it down, and then calmly desired all the servants to leave the room. As soon as they were gone she took it up again hastily, and read it aloud, as if to enjoy it more fully. It was as follows:—

To "Miss E. Plummy.

"Hanover Square, July 15.

"My dear Madam,

"I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your very kind letter, the date of which has been omitted, no doubt by an oversight. You have stated that I still hold a place in your memory, although you have now got another doll, and that your affection for this latter one is only by reason of your thoughts dwelling upon me. You have also stated that you possess various little articles; and I, moreover, notice sundry allusions to needlework and Twelfth-cake, to your brother Master Thomas, and to Buonaparte and Mr Abernethy; the purport of which is not necessary for me to discuss. But I must frankly tell you that, having now become the doll of another, I cannot with propriety reciprocate that solicitude which you are pleased to entertain for me, nor can I, for the same reason, address you in similar terms of affection. At the same time, my dear madam, permit me to add that I cherish a

lively sense of all the kindness you once showed me, and I cannot doubt of the sincerity of your present professions of respect and esteem.

"I have the honour to be,

"My dear Madam, very faithfully yours,

"M. P."

When the countess had concluded this letter she hastily put a cambric handkerchief up to her face, and particularly over her mouth, and laughed to herself for at least a minute. I also laughed to myself. What a polite, unfeeling, stupid reply to a kind, tender-hearted little girl like Ellen Plummy. Whatever knowledge the minister might have had of grown-up men and women, and the world, and the affairs of state, it was certain he was not equal to enter into the mind of a doll who had a heart like mine. It would have been so *much* better if his lordship, instead of writing that letter, had eaten his currant tart,—and then gone to bed.

CHAPTER X.

PLAYING WITH FIRE.

I have now something more than a narrow escape to relate; for though I did really escape, yet it was not without a dreadful accident, and some iujury. It was also the occasion of my changing my place of residence and style of living. All, however, shall be told in proper order.

Lady Flora having learnt my name from the address of the letter I had received, she took a sudden fancy to have it engraved upon a little gold bracelet. When the bracelet was sent home s e fastened it upon my wrist, but it dropped off once or twice, being rather too large, so we drove to the jeweller's house, which was near Charing cross, and there it was fastened to my wrist by rivets, so

that it could not be taken off at all. This was what Lady Flora desired.

On returning through the Haymarket my mamma recollected, as we passed the Opera House, that she had still never seen the dancing there, on account of her sleeping; and at the same time I, for *my* part, only recollected my narrow escape. But the loss of the opera dancing made Lady Flora only think the more about it, and about dancing; and when we arrived at home she ran to her mamma, and begged to be taken to Willis's Rooms—in fact, she wanted to dance herself at "Almack's," and to take me with her, as no doubt there would be many other dolls in the room, with whom, after mutual and satisfactory introductions, I could associate.

Lady Flowerdale said she was afraid that Lady Flora, being not yet nine years of age, was too young to be taken to "Almack's;" she could, however, take her to the Duchess of Guineahen's ball, which was to be given next month. This greatly pleased Flora, and meantime she resolved to take an extra lesson in dancing of Madame Michaud, in order to be the better prepared for the ball.

I was present at all the lessons of dancing, and saw Madame Michaud seated with her gold snuff-box, tapping upon the lid to keep time, and taking

an immense pinch of snuff when Lady Flora danced well, and a still more immense pinch when she danced badly, besides scolding the young man who played the violin, as if it had been his fault.

Another thing, however, and a still more important one, was to be done, before this ball occurred, and this was to get ready the ball dresses. A message was immediately sent to a celebrated milliner in Piccadilly to come immediately and take orders for ball dresses, for Lady Flora and her doll.

During all the time these dresses were being made, my mamma was so impatient and restless that it was quite an unhappiness to see her. I often thought what a pity it was she had not learned to make dresses herself, her mind would then have been employed, and she would have been so much more comfortable. Oh, how different was the happy day I spent among the poor little milliners when Ellen Plummy and Nanny Bell sat under the tent made of a sheet, to make me a frock and trousers. How happy were they over the work, and how impatient and cross was Lady Flora, who had no work to do. Her mind was so disturbed that she was quite unable to attend to any of her lessons; she insisted, however, upon her governess giving me lessons instead, by placing the pen in my hand, and

directing it till I had copied several pages of a book. By this means I learned to write,—the governess was employed,—and my mamma said it was the same as if she took her usual lessons.

At last the dresses came home. They were beautiful, and both exactly alike. They were made of the thinnest white gauze, to be worn over very full petticoats of the same white gauze; so that they set out very much, and looked very soft and fleecy. They were trimmed with an imitation of lily of the valley, made in white satin and silver. The trowsers were of white satin, trimmed with gauze.

Now there was such a trying on and changing, and proposals for alterations, and sending all back to the milliner's, and having all back again two hours afterwards, to try on once more in case they really did *not* need alteration.

The day of the ball was rather cold and windy; so that, although it was the month of August, a fire was ordered in the nursery, and in Lady Flora's bed-room, lest she might take cold. Towards evening the dresses were all laid out ready to put on; but when my mamma saw them, she could not wait, and insisted on being dressed, although it was five hours before the time. In two hours and a half she was ready; and then I was dressed, which

occupied an hour more. Still there was a long time to wait; so Lady Flora took me in her arms, and began to dance from room to room,—that is, from the nursery to her bed-room, from one fire-place to the other. In doing this she observed that each time she turned, her full, gauze frock gave the fire a *puff*, so that a blaze came; and as she was amused by it, she went each time nearer, and whisked round quicker in order to make the blaze greater. "Oh, Lady Flora!" cried her maid, "pray take care of your dress; you go too near; wait till I run and fetch the fire-guards."

Away ran the maid to fetch the fire-guards; and while she was gone Lady Flora determined to dance for the last time still nearer than ever to each fire before she whisked round. The very next time she did it she went just the least bit too near; the hem of her frock whisked against the bars—and her frock was in a blaze in a moment!

She gave a loud scream and a jump, and was going to run, when most fortunately her foot caught one corner of a thick rug, and down she fell. This smothered the blaze, but still her clothes were on fire; and she lay shrieking and rolling and writhing on the floor.

Up ran the nursery maid, and when she saw

what had happened, she began screaming too—and up ran the page, and when he saw what had happened he fell down upon his face with fear and confusion—and up ran the very tall footman, and the instant he looked into the room, and smelt the fire, he ran away again as fast as possible—and then up ran the countess herself, and she ran straight to her child, and rolled the thick rug all round her, and carried her in her arms to her own room.

Physicians and surgeons were sent for, and all the burnt things were taken off, and thrown on one side. Among these I lay; my beautiful dress was all black tinder; but I was not really much burnt, nor was Lady Flora. A few weeks might cure her, though the scars would always remain, and spoil her prettiness; but what could cure *me?* I was so scorched and frizzled, that the paint which was on my skin had blistered and peeled off. I was quite black. No notice was taken of me; and in the confusion I was carried out of the room, with the rest of the burnt rags, and thrown by one of the servants, in her haste, out of a back window.

How I escaped utter destruction, in this dreadful fall, I cannot think; unless it was owing to my being wrapped all round in singed clothes, so that

I fell softly. I had nearly fainted with fear, when the flames first caught my dress; and when the housemaid threw open the window to fling me out, my senses utterly forsook me.

I fell over a low wall, into a passage leading towards some stables. In the course of a few minutes I recovered my senses, but only to experience a fresh alarm! A fine large Newfoundland dog, who was just passing, thought somebody had thrown him a broiled bone; so he caught me up in his mouth, and away he ran with me, wagging his tail.

CHAPTER XI.

THE PORTRAIT PAINTER.

The Newfoundland dog soon found that the smell of my burnt clothes and scorched skin was not the same as a broiled bone; and that, in fact, I was not good to eat. But he still continued to hold me in his great warm, red mouth, because he was used to fetch and carry; and, as he felt no wish to taste me, he thought he would take me, just as I was, to his young mistress, who was not far off. He had merely wandered about Hanover square to amuse himself, as he knew the neighbourhood very well.

The dog ran through the door-way of some private stables into a passage that led into the square; and turning down, first one street, then another, he soon stopped at a door, upon which was written, "J. C. Johnson, Portrait Painter."

The door was shut, but the area gate happened to be open; so down ran the dog into the area, and into the front kitchen, and across that to the stairs, and up the stairs (three flights) till he came to the front room of the second floor, which was a-jar, and in he bounced. There sat a little girl and her aunt; and Mr J. C. Johnson was painting the aunt's portrait, in a great white turban.

The dog ran at once to the little girl, and laying me at her feet, sprang back a step or two, and began wagging and swishing his tail about, and hanging out a long crimson tongue, and breathing very fast, and waiting to be praised and patted, and called a good dog, for what he had brought.

"Oh, Nep!" cried the aunt to the dog, "what horrid thing *have* you brought? some dirty old bone."

"It is an Indian doll, I believe," said Mr Johnson, taking me up from the carpet: "an Indian image of ebony, much defaced by time."

"I think," said the little girl, to whom Mr Johnson handed me, "I think it looks very like a wooden doll, with a burnt frock and scorched face."

"Well so it is, I *do* believe," said the aunt.

"Let me examine the figure once more," said

the portrait-painter, laying down his palette of colours, but keeping his brush in the other hand.

"Yes, yes, I fancy, madam, your niece is correct. It is not a work of Indian art, nor of Egyptian, nor of Grecian art; it is the work of a London doll-maker."

I expected he was, of course, about to say, "by the celebrated Mr Sprat," but he did not.

"Oh, you poor London doll!" said the little girl, "what a pity you were not made in India, or somewhere a wonderful way off, then Mr Johnson would have taken pity on you, and painted you all over."

Mr Johnson laughed at this; and then gave such a droll look at the little girl, and such a good-natured look at me. "Well," said he to her, "well, my little dear, leave this black doll with me; and when you come again with your aunt, you shall see what I have done."

The aunt thanked Mr Johnson for his pleasant promise, while she was taking off her turban to depart, and away they went, the Newfoundland dog, Nep., leaping down stairs before them, to show them the way. They were from Buckinghamshire, and had lodgings only a few streets distant. The aunt was Mrs Brown, her niece was Mary Hope.

Mary Hope's father was a clerk in the Bank; but she chiefly lived with her aunt in the country, as her father had seven other daughters, and a small salary.

As soon as they were gone, Mr Johnson told his son to tear off all my burnt clothes, scrape me all over with the back of a knife, and then wash me well with soap and water. When this was done, the good-natured artist painted me all over from head to foot. When I was dry he again painted me all over with a warmer colour, like flesh; and when that also was dry, he painted my cheeks, and lips, and eyebrows; and finally gave me a complete skin of the most delicate varnish. My beautiful hair was entirely burned off; and Mr Johnson said this was a sad pity, as he did not know how to supply it. But his son told him there was a doll's wig-shop very near the Temple, where a new head of hair could be got. So the kind Mr Johnson took the measure of my head; and when he went out for his evening walk, he went to the shop and bought me a most lovely dark auburn wig, with long ringlets, and his son glued it on. When all was done, they hung me up in a safe place to dry.

The hanging up to dry immediately reminded me of my infancy in the shop of Mr Sprat, when I

first dangled from the beam and looked round upon all my fellow-creature dolls who were dangling and staring and smiling on all sides. The recollection was, on the whole, pleasing. I seemed to have lived a long time since that day. How much I had to recollect! There was the doll shop in Holborn—and little Emmy, who used to read little books in the back-room—the Marcet books, the Harriet Myrtle books, the Mary Howitt books, and the delightful story of 'The Good-natured Bear,'—in short, all the different stories and histories, and voyages, and travels, and fairy-tales she had read—and there was the master of the shop in his brown paper cock'd hat—and Thomas Plummy and the cake—and Ellen Plummy, and Twelfth-night in the pastry-cook's shop—and the different scenes that I had witnessed among the little milliners; and the making of my first frock and trowsers under the tent, upon Ellen Plummy's bed; and my life in Hanover square, during which I saw so many great places in great London, and had been taught by Lady Flora's governess to write, and had fallen headlong from a box at the Opera, into a gentleman's hat; and where, after having beautiful ball-dresses made, my little lady mamma and I had both caught fire; and, lastly, there was my tumble over the wall into

the passage, where the Newfoundland dog had fancied I was a broiled bone, and caught me up in his mouth. Here was a biography to recollect; while, for the second time in my life, I was hanging up for my paint and varnish to dry.

CHAPTER XII.

PUNCH AND JUDY.

When Mary Hope and her aunt came again to the portrait-painter's house, he presented me to her with a smiling look. "There, Miss Mary," said he, "you see I have been at work upon this child of yours, and I think with good effect. And now that the countenance can be seen, we should observe that *this* doll has really very good features. I mean that they are more marked than is common with dolls. She has a good nose; very bright eyes; and what is very uncommon to see in a doll—she has something like a chin. She has, also, a very pretty mouth, and a sensible forehead. But another remarkable discovery I have made is that of her name! This bracelet which I have cleaned and

brightened, I find to be gold, and upon it is engraved "MARIA POPPET!"

Mary Hope received me with great pleasure, and gave Mr Johnson many, many thanks for his kindness in taking so much pains about me. "But what dress," said she, "is this you have given her? is it not too warm?" "I fear it is," said Mr Johnson, laughing. "It is only a bit of green-baize for a wrapper, and an old silver cord for a girdle, which I happened to have at hand, and thought this was better than nothing. You can make her a nice new summer dress when you get home." Mary declared she would do so that very day.

The sitting for Aunt Brown's portrait being concluded, she went down stairs with Mary; who carried me, tossing me up in the air for joy, and catching me as I was falling. This frightened me very much, and I was so glad when we got down stairs. Upon the mat we found the great dog Nep. asleep. He jumped up in a moment, and went bouncing out before us into the street. A hackney coach was waiting at the door, and directly the steps were let down Nep. jumped in first. We arrived at their lodgings, which were very comfortable and very quiet. I much enjoyed the quiet, after all the alarms, and dangers, and narrow escapes, and

troubles, I had recently gone through. The weather was *very* rainy, nearly the whole week, so that I was never taken out during that time ; but the days passed very pleasantly, as I often heard Mary read pretty books aloud to her aunt. She also busied herself in making me new clothes, for indeed I wanted everything, as at this time my only dress was the green-baize robe, with the bit of old silver cord round the waist, which Mr Johnson had given me.

One fine day, after the bad weather was over, a hackney coach was at the door waiting to take us out somewhere. Down we went, Neptune, as usual, running down stairs before us with his red tongue out, and leaping in first. "Now Mary," said her aunt, as we drove along, "shall we go to the Exhibition of Pictures at the Royal Academy in Trafalgar square? (Neptune, *do* not poke your great nose so upon my knees—) or shall we go to the Diorama in the Regent's Park? (Neptune, your paws are not clean—you will soil my silk gown—) or shall we go to the Panorama in Leicester square? (Neptune, your nose is *so* cold—) or shall we go to the British Museum?"

"Oh dear aunt," said Mary, "I do not know which is best. I should like to go to them all!

(Nep., you must *not* lick the doll's face—the fresh paint may come off!)"

"But you cannot see all in the same day," said her aunt.

"No, aunt," replied Mary, "I know that—only I could not help saying what I should like. Let us go first, then, to the British Museum. But will they let me take Maria Poppet in with me?"

"I should think they would hardly object," said her aunt, "for I never yet saw a doll left among the walking sticks and umbrellas at the door, however plain the doll might be. They could never object to a pretty doll like Maria—though, to be sure, she might be better dressed. Really you must make haste with her clothes. I cannot let you take her out any more in that strange dress Mr Johnson tied round her."

Mary promised to finish my clothes in a day or two. At this moment the coach stopped, in consequence of a crowd that was assembled in the street round a performance of Punch and Judy.

Mary's aunt put down the glass at one side in order to see what occasioned the stoppage; and as it was quite impossible for the coach to go on immediately, both Mary and her aunt sat looking out of the window at the acting of Mr Punch. He was

behaving in his usual naughty and impudent way, and was now pretending to nurse his child. This child was a wooden doll, dressed in an old green sort of a night-gown, not unlike the colour of my own green wrapper. Presently the child was heard to cry very loudly; so Mr Punch declared he would have nothing to do with such a cross child, and would throw it out of the window. The child cried again; and Punch actually did what he had threatened, and tossed the wooden doll out upon the heads of the crowd who were gathered around, and it fell somewhere among them. This produced such scrambling and confusion and laughing and noise that it made Neptune jump up in our coach and thrust his head out of the coach window to see what was the matter. When the people saw this they laughed louder than before, and made more noise, so that Nep., thinking they meant to be rude to us, began to bark and throw himself about from one side to the other; in doing which he accidentally ran his head against Mary's shoulder, with such a jerk that he knocked me out of her arms, and I fell down among the crowd!

"Oh, Nep., Nep.," cried Mary, "what *have* you done?"

In a moment out of the window jumped Neptune,

and began to scramble through the crowd in search of me, barking away as loud as he could. The disturbance and confusion increased; but who shall describe my dismay when I saw Nep., in his haste, seize upon the child of Mr Punch and carry it back in his mouth to the coach instead of me; while at the same moment a tall man, picking me up, handed me into Punch's show, saying, "Here, take your child, Mr Punch!"

CHAPTER XIII.

THE CITY.

How long it was before the performance concluded I do not know, as I was in so distressed and confused a state of mind. All I can remember is that I was thrown headlong into a small box, among a number of dirty old wooden dolls dressed in rags and bits of cloth of all colours. Here I lay a few minutes, till a shrill, squeaking voice, that came through somebody's nose, cried out "Hurray!" and then down tumbled Mr Punch himself into the box right across me, and the lid of the box was instantly shut down, and there we all lay squeezed together in the dark.

I soon began to feel wretchedly uncomfortable—it was so close and hot, and I also had a very bad head-ache, owing to something that pressed hard

upon my head. When the box was next opened I found it was Mr Punch's high-crowned wooden hat that had hurt me, in consequence of one of its hard corners pressing against the back of my head.

The master of the show now began to take some of us out for a morning's performance, and to arrange the dolls upon a board in the order in which he should want them to make their appearance. "Now," said he, "I want the infant," (meaning Punch's child) "I want the infant—where is Punch's young one?" Then taking me up—"Ah! what is this," said he, "how did this creature come here? Why, somehow, she has got here in the place of the infant. She must have popped in by mistake, during the noise in the street with that great barking dog. Well, she's too big for me, and she's much too good to throw away, so I had better sell her."

He had scarcely uttered these words when the sound of "Clo'! clo'! clo'!" met our ears, and the master of the show immediately issued from underneath his curtains, with me in his hand, and beckoned the Jew clothesman to come to him. He proposed to sell me; and, after half an hour's bargaining, during which so many words were exchanged that my patience was quite worn out, and I did not care what became of me, the Jew carried

me away in his bag. I felt myself quite as disagreeably situated as when squeezed among the family of Mr Punch, for my companions in the bag appeared to be two old waistcoats, with hard metal buttons pressing against my left cheek, an old hat, three pairs of old shoes, seven pairs of slippers, a humming top, a teetotum, a snuffer-tray, a coat that seemed greasy, a tin pot, some old gold lace, a bundle of rags, seven bones, two rabbit skins, a stuffed parrot, the head of a rocking horse, a tin box and canister, a cow's horn, a pound of yellow soap, a woollen nightcap, five pairs of worsted stockings, a parcel of tobacco, and half a roast goose. I was sadly afraid that the brass buttons, and the edges of the tin box and canister, the snuffer-tray, or the head of the rocking horse, or the beak of the stuffed parrot, would destroy the beautiful complexion Mr Johnson had given me, when fortunately the very same idea occurred to the cautious mind of the wise old Jew, who suddenly put his hand into the bag, and, thrusting my head and shoulders into a worsted stocking, he rolled the rest of me tightly in the coat, and then crammed me into the old hat, with my legs upwards. One of my hands, however, happened accidentally to be left free; and, in cramming me into

the hat, which fitted very tight, this hand went through a split in the edge of the crown. I should not have thought much of this circumstance, but that I presently discovered the hat to have a strong scent of otto of rose, and then I suddenly recollected that this must be the very hat into which I had fallen at the Opera. My first acquaintance with the hat having been in the most fashionable place in London, this was a strange place of meeting for both of us.

In the evening when the Jew arrived at his lodgings, and had eaten his supper of fried soles and German sausage, with a bunch of white turnip radishes, he emptied the whole contents of his bag out on the floor, and bent over us from his chair, for some minutes, with a face of great satisfaction. He had collected all this bag-full in one day. "Yes," said he, taking me up from all the rest, "yes, this is the best part of my day's work." I was beginning to feel pleased at this compliment, when the Jew added, "this is a beautiful wooden doll; but her gold bracelet is the thing for me!" So I saw it was not I, but my gold bracelet that pleased his fancy.

He took me to a little table; and there, with a pair of pincers, he took off my bracelet; and, in its

place, he fastened a stupid piece of tin, upon which, with the point of a broken fork, he scratched, "Maria Poppet." I could have cried bitterly at the change, but I was able to restrain myself.

I felt that I should not remain long with the old Jew, because he would soon sell me. The very next day he actually did sell me; and my purchaser was an Italian organ-boy.

This boy had been used to carry a monkey about on the top of his organ, who sat there in a red jacket and soldier's cap, and made faces, while the boy's little sister went round to collect halfpence in a tambourine. This poor little monkey had caught a very bad cold, by being out in the rain one night; and had died; and the Italian boy had come to the Jew, to know if he would buy it to stuff for a glass case. The old Jew considered a long while, and then said he could give no money for the poor little pug, but he would give him something that would be better for him, because it would help him to *make* money. So saying, he offered me to the boy, in exchange for the monkey. The Italian boy hesitated at first; he said he wanted a little money. But his sister exclaiming, "Oh, do, brother, let us have the doll!" he consented; and, fitting on me the red jacket, he stuck me upon the top of the

organ, and off we went into the street, to the tune of 'I'd be a butterfly!' which he immediately began to play.

We went through many streets, playing various tunes by the way, and getting many pennies and halfpennies, until we arrived at Guildhall, when Brigitta (that was the little girl's name) said she wanted to run in and show me two very large dolls indeed, called Gog and Magog. "So do," said her brother (whose name was Marco), "and while you go I'll play the tune I think Gog and Magog would like best;" and he immediately began once more to play 'I'd be a butterfly!'

We ran in and saw the great ugly things. Oh, they were such great dolls! and it was such a large room! Out ran Brigitta again, and we went to the Mansion house and played 'Sweet home,'—in the middle of which a fat gentleman, who had just come out of a pastrycook's, put a slice of plum cake into Brigitta's tambourine. We then went and played 'Cherry ripe' in front of the Monument, but we did not play long, as Brigitta got frightened; it looked so high she was afraid it would tumble down and spoil dolly. We next went and played in front of the London tavern, in Bishopsgate street; but there happened to be a great "public dinner" going

on, so one of the waiters told us to go away, as there was an alderman just then making a "speech," and we disturbed him; so we walked slowly away, playing 'They're all nodding.'

We now went to St Paul's churchyard and played the 'Old Hundredth Psalm,' and 'God save the Queen,' and 'Cherry ripe.' I never saw anything before or since that looked so great to me as St Paul's, for although there was a most beautiful doll shop within sight, I could not help looking all the time at the great building.

After this as we had made one shilling and sevenpence in the course of the day, we went home to Marco's lodgings. He had a little room behind the back kitchen of a cobbler's house in the neighbourhood of London bridge. Brigitta placed me on a straw mattress up in one corner, and then took out two plates and a mug without a handle from a cupboard in the wall, and Marco then laid upon the plate several things to eat, which he had bought on their way home, among which I saw something that looked very much like an ounce of sugar candy, besides the piece of plum cake that had been put into Brigitta's tambourine. They were very merry over their supper. Then Marco, who was very tired from having carried the organ about all day,

fell fast asleep, and Brigitta presently took out from a little bundle several pieces of bright scarlet and green stuff, and, in the neatest manner possible began to make me a very pretty dress, just like the one she had on herself. I was very glad of this, for I did not at all like being dressed like the monkey. She was a very pretty little girl of about nine years of age, with a dark brown complexion and red lips, and large black eyes, and long, black, glossy, curling hair.

I passed several weeks with this merry little mamma, who was always laughing, or chattering, or playing the tambourine and collecting halfpence in it, or dancing me about, except when I sat upon the organ in the place of the monkey. I saw a great deal of London by this means, but more particularly of the City, as far as from Temple Bar to the Thames Tunnel, because Marco knew a great many houses where there were children who liked to hear the organ, and he and his sister generally visited each house about once a week.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE LORD MAYOR'S SHOW.

The day approached for the Lord Mayor's Show. Marco determined that Brigitta should see it; and my pretty Italian mamma determined that I should see it too, so out we went early to get a good place. Marco leaving the organ at home, up in one corner, as he said the Lord Mayor would be sure to have plenty of music without his help, and they should find the organ very troublesome to themselves, and other people too, in a great crowd. We arrived in Cheapside about eight o'clock. On the way we had turned up a little alley, where a man kept an early breakfast stall, and had two pints of hot coffee and two thick slices of bread and butter; and when these were eaten, Marco bought two more, which

he wrapped up in a large cabbage-leaf, and put into his pocket. He said they were sure to get hungry with waiting in the street.

Well, as I said, we got into Cheapside before eight o'clock. It was a foggy morning, and wet and muddy under foot. But still there were a great many people going backwards and forwards, and all looking very busy and anxious. We first chose a spot near Bow church; but very soon a number of tall people came and stood in front of us, so that we could not see through them, nor over their heads. Marco said to one of the tallest of the men, "I wish you would be so kind as to move a little, sir, we cannot see over your head." "Oh," said this unkind man, "suppose you find another place." "And so let us," said Brigitta, "for we can see nothing here through these tall bodies. Come, Marco." We accordingly walked on.

We had only gone a few paces when Marco said he recollected there had been a fire in Cheapside only a few days ago on the opposite side of the way, and as there could not have been time to build a new house, or even pull down the old one, we might perhaps get up into the ruins somewhere. He was quite right. There stood the black shell of the house, with some wooden planks in front of all

the lower windows. The crowd was now fast collecting. We ran across, and pushing aside one of the planks, in we got,—scrambled over a great quantity of rubbish, and black bricks and beams, and smoke and dirt, and broken things,—and with great difficulty Marco climbed up the remains of a broken staircase to see if it could be safely attempted. "Now, Brigitta," said he, when he was up on a broad beam running close underneath the first-floor windows, "Now, Brigitta, it's all safe, come up."

"But how shall I get the poppet up?" said Brigitta.

"Oh," said Marco, "make haste, for I see more people getting in by the windows, and you will lose your place. Throw her up to me! make haste!"

I trembled from head to foot. But before I had time to think more about my fears, the little girl pitched me up in the air, and in the cleverest way possible Marco caught me in his two hands. Then up got Brigitta, and the first thing she did was to station me between two broken bricks at the side of the window, so that I could look down from this height upon the whole of the Lord Mayor's Show as it passed in the street beneath. We had an excellent place at the middle window of the ruined case of the burnt house.

We had not been here a minute before a crowd of people got in through the planks below, several of which were broken down, and in they came rushing, and tried to clamber up to the windows. However, we three kept our good places.

And now came peppering down a shower of rain, and then another shower of rain stronger than the first, and then there came another shower of rain that lasted an hour, and then there was a thick yellow fog for another hour, and then the rain ceased, and the fog began to clear away; and when the fog was gone, suddenly the sun came out, and shone very brightly.

"Now," said Marco, "let us eat our other slices of bread and butter." This they did with great pleasure; the sun shining like gold upon the butter all the time.

They had scarcely done eating when "boom!" came the sound of a great drum,—and all sorts of musical instruments struck up, and the boom of the great drum was quickly followed by the "rub-a-dub row-de-dow" of smaller drums, and the "too-ra-loo" of fifes, and then we saw the show coming along the streets. The streets were lined with soldiers who made a long alley; on the outsides of the soldiers next the houses the crowds were struggling

to look over the soldiers' heads ; and along the inside of the alley formed by the soldiers, the show came pompously along in the middle of the street.

I have said that I was seated between two broken bricks, at one side of the wall, and next to me was Brigitta. There were at least five people standing behind us at the same window, looking over our heads, and behind Brigitta was a person in a waterproof cape, part of which hanging over Brigitta's left shoulder, came just in front of my face. Brigitta perceived this, and several times pushed the cape back to enable me to see ; but as the show came on and got finer and finer, and more thick with men all dressed in colours, and silks, and ribbons, and gold lace,—and the horses in their fine harnesses and trappings came nodding and dancing along, and the coaches got more golden and shining with fat figures in cocked hats sitting inside, and very fat gentlemen with red faces in splendid waistcoats, and the crowds of cocked hats, and multitudes of knees with shining buckles increased,—of all this splendour I had only time to take one look, and then the heavy cape again fell before my eyes, and Brigitta was too much engaged herself to think any more of removing it. However, I did occasionally manage to see, because the person in the waterproof cape moved about,

and often bent himself from side to side to see better, and once when he did so I got sight of the two men in armour,—two men covered all over,—one in iron and one in brass, just as lobsters are covered with their shells, only shining in the sun, and riding on large black horses. Besides these I also saw the principal dolls of this wonderful show—I mean the Lord Mayor in his coach, with the wooden Sword-bearer and the gingerbread Mace-bearer—at least they looked like wood and gingerbread; and, indeed, so did the Lord Mayor himself. The Sword-bearer and the Mace-bearer both sat back to back at the open windows in a thorough draught, and they both appeared to have got colds in their noses. We had an excellent view of the Lord Mayor in his robe of scarlet, with gold and coloured stripes over it, and wearing a beautiful necklace hanging down upon his breast. He gave a sigh as he passed us, and laid his hand upon his fine stomach and then he gave a smile. The coach was drawn by eight horses with proud necks, all covered with rich aprons, and ribbons, and straps, and tassels, and tinkerums and things, and with quantities of coloured ribbon-bows, and streamers and gold lace, and brass nails and buckles. Then the coach—oh, what a coach! It

was like a coach made of glass set in a very fine, fancy looking-glass frame, and stuck on a sort of gilded car all covered with paintings and golden carvings and sweetmeats, extremely like several coaches I had seen on twelfth-cakes, only a great deal bigger. I wondered very much if it was made of sugar.

We waited till the procession returned; it was a long time, but we were determined to wait. When they all came back we saw, besides the fine gentlemen, a number of beautiful fat ladies in feathers, with diamonds and rosy cheeks, the fattest of whom, and the most beautiful of course, was the Lady Mayoress in an apricot satin dress with all sorts of embroidery, and lace, and ribbons, and spangles, and precious things, and looking all so stiff and expensive behind the glass, but yet seeming to be alive, although afraid to move in the least for fear of injuring some part of all this dress. I thought it was so kind of everybody in the show to take the time and trouble to let themselves be dressed for us to see them.

All of a sudden we heard a great crack, and then a loud cry from a number of people below, "The wall is falling! come down, all of you!" No one wanted a second warning, and all who were up at

the windows went scrambling down as quick as they could, and in the best way they could; but how it was all done I have no notion, as Marco had suddenly seized me, and thrust me, head foremost, into his pocket, where I remained for two or three hours, and when next taken out I found myself in the little back room, where they were going to have some supper of macaroni.

CHAPTER XV.

THE LOST BRACELET.

The next events of my life were two pleasures and one pain. The pain was a change of circumstances, and the first pleasure was the possession of a new wardrobe. How could I have a new wardrobe, when my mamma was only the little sister of a poor Italian organ-boy, and had but one dress for herself? It all came about through what I considered, at the time, a great misfortune; it was the change of my present mamma for another; and I was very fond of my little Italian mamma, and therefore was sorry to be obliged to leave her.

The day after Lord Mayor's day was cold and wet; but, notwithstanding, we all went out with the

organ, for Marco said we must earn some money to make up for yesterday, which was a day of pleasure; so we went round to several houses where he was accustomed to play. At last we got into Finsbury square, and there began to play before a house where a little girl called Lydia Thomson lived. Her papa was a partner in the house of Barclay and Perkins, the great brewers, and she used to come out on the balcony when Marco played, and always threw him a penny, and sometimes danced up and down the balcony to his music. Well, while we were playing on this cold wet day, it began to snow, and little Lydia, who was dancing on the balcony, was obliged to run into the warm drawing-room for fear she should catch cold; and when she looked out, she thought Brigitta seemed so wet and cold in the snow, that she almost began to cry, and asked her mamma to let us all come in. Her mamma gave us leave, so down she ran and brought us all in, and placed us by a warm parlour fire. Then away she ran to her mamma again, and presently came back dancing and skipping about before a servant, who carried a tray with two plates full of roast mutton and potatoes from the servants' dinner, and she told Marco and Brigitta to begin to eat, and they laughed and looked so pleased, and ate away, and

began to look so much warmer and more comfortable. Then away she ran again, and brought down a box full of sweetmeats and sugar-plums, and put it down before Brigitta, and said, "That is for you," and Brigitta kissed her hand to her so prettily, and said, "Thank you, dear little lady." Then Marco asked if he might play to her, and she said, "Oh yes," so he played all his tunes, and she danced up and down the passage, and in and out of the room.

When all the tunes were done, Marco said, "Now we must go," so they bid good bye, and the servant opened the door, and the wind blew in very cold. So the little girl said, "Shut the door again, and wait a minute," and ran away again to her mamma; and after about five minutes, down she came, bringing a warm woollen shawl for Brigitta, and an old cape of her papa's for Marco, and she said, "My mamma gives you these." Oh, they were so much obliged to her. They thought her such a dear, kind little girl; and Brigitta's large black eyes filled with tears while she thanked her, but little Lydia only danced and jumped about.

Then Brigitta put on the shawl, and took me up, and I thought she was going to carry me away with her, but she said, "Dear, kind little lady, take this doll from me; it is such a great pleasure

to me to have something to give you." Lydia said, "But you like to have the doll." "No, no!" answered Brigitta, "take it, dear little lady!" So she and Marco hurried away, and left me with Lydia Thomson.

I was at first very sorry to be parted from my merry Italian mamma; but I soon became very fond of this kind little Lydia. She used to play with me a great deal, and she took off that ugly tin bracelet from my arm, but not till she had read my name—"Maria Poppet." She dressed me very nicely, too, so that I had, as I have said, a new wardrobe; and a very few days after I was settled in this new home, I had the second pleasure I have mentioned. It happened in this manner.

One very cloudy morning, a voice crying, "Clo'! clo'!" came down Finsbury square, and stopped in front of our house. Again the voice said, "Clo'!" and then, after stopping a little, said very quickly, "Clo'! clo'!" I recollected whose voice that was in a moment, and it made me tremble. It was the old Jew who had bought me of Punch's showman.

Lydia had left me sitting at the nursery window, with my nose and cheek resting against the glass; I could therefore look out, and I now saw him

walk up to the area, and poke his head through the iron rails, looking down, so that I only saw his round shoulders and his rusty black bag. Now I heard the area door open, as if one of the maids was coming out, and instantly the Jew said, "My dear, I want to speak something!" "Speak then," said the merry voice of my mamma's nursery maid.

"Come up the area steps, my dear," said the Jew; "it's a cold wind, and I'm rather hoarse to-day; and besides, my dear, I've something of great consequence to speak."

The nursery maid ran up, saying, "Well, be quick then."

"Yes, my dear," said the Jew, and then, lowering his voice, he said, "You've got a wooden doll in this house, my dear." I trembled more than ever at this; I thought he had come for me.

"Well," said the nursery maid, "and what of that?—is that all you've got to say, with your whispering and winking, and screwing your face!"

"Not all, my dear," said the Jew. "Your doll is a doll of some rank and consequence, and her family name is Poppet, and her other name is Maria."

"Well, lauk now!" said the maid, "how did you guess that?"

"Guess it, my dear," said the Jew, "I knew it long ago. She used to have a bracelet upon her arm, with the name engraved upon it."

"Yes, so she had, so she had," said the maid; "a tin one it was."

The Jew laughed, and said, "A gold one, my dear. It was tin when you had her, I dare say; but formerly, in the days of her greatness, my dear, she had one made of pure gold, and I can tell you what"—here he again lowered his voice—"I know where the gold one is. I can find it. Yes, my dear, I can, and I may as well just let you have a peep at it." Here the Jew drew something in a paper out of his pocket, and held it up.

"Oh my!" said the nursery maid, "well, if ever! There's Maria Poppet engraved upon it—and you've brought it back to young missis. Oh, how pleased she will be!"

"Yes, my dear," said the Jew, putting it back into his pocket. "You can tell them what you've seen, and say that I have no objection to sell it, to oblige them—and it's pure gold, you know, my dear, and I'll come again to-morrow morning. Clo'! clo'!

clo' !" and away he went, leaving the poor nursery maid calling out after him in vain.

Well, this was the talk of the whole house. Everybody was so much interested about it. Next morning the Jew came, and asked to see Mrs Thomson. He was shown into the passage, and then he produced the gold bracelet, which fitted my wrist exactly, and everybody admired it very much, particularly Lydia, who kissed it several times.

"You will sell it, of course?" said Mrs Thomson.

After a long hesitation and consideration, the Jew named his price. Mrs Thomson then made him an offer of some money for it, but the Jew said he could melt it, and make more by it than that.

At the sound of "melting" it, Lydia began to cry bitterly, so we were all sent away into the nursery, and told to wait till Mrs Thomson came to us. How it was settled I do not know, but after waiting about half an hour, we heard the sound of "Clo'! clo'!" and Mrs Thomson came up stairs, bringing the bracelet in her hand, and that very day it was fastened on my wrist, as at first.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE NEW GRAND CHRISTMAS PANTOMIME.

Lydia Thomson had long been promised to be taken to the next Christmas Pantomime, and the happy day for this was now arrived. All the morning long, Lydia was so restless, she was unable to remain quiet for two minutes together. If she sat down to work, she was often obliged to get up and dance, and then to run and look out at the window,—then to run down stairs singing,—then to hop up again upon one leg,—then to run and look at the play-bill, and read it all through aloud,—then to try and read it topsy-turvy, and ask me to help her,—then to dance me up in the air,—then to run and roll over and over with me on the sofa, crying out, "Oh, Maria! oh, Maria! we're going to see the New Grand Christmas Pantomime!"

At last the evening came. We were dressed in good time. My mamma, Lydia, wore a white frock and blue sash, and looked very nice; but she made me look beautiful, for she said I should be dressed in a way to suit a beautiful pantomime; so she made me a frock of thin white muslin, and trimmed it with some little pink roses that her mamma gave her, and put a wreath of little pink roses round my hair. The carriage came to the door, and we drove off to the Drury-lane Theatre. There were Lydia's papa and mamma, and her two cousins, and out they all jumped, ran past the crowd at the door, and up the stairs, till we reached a private box, which was exactly over one side of the stage, upon which we looked down with great expectation. I thought we should have seen better if we had been in a box in the middle of the theatre, but still this was very nice. We did nothing but clap our hands and look at the dark curtain. The play was over. We had not been allowed to come till the play was over, because Lydia's papa said he knew we should be tired if we did.

The house was very full of people, and I began to look round me, and up and down in all directions. But who shall describe my pleasure and surprise when, looking up into the two-shilling gallery, who

should I see sitting in the very front row but the celebrated Mr Sprat! On one side of him was his wife, who appeared to be eating periwinkles; on the other side sat his two sons and a daughter; so that they every one of them had a front seat. Looking down into the pit, who should I next see but the master of the doll shop, who had fancied himself Napoleon in a brown paper cocked hat, with his daughter and little Emmy at his side; but what gave me far greater pleasure was to see very near them, though a little in front, Ellen Plummy and her brother Thomas. Oh, my dear little Ellen Plnmmy, how I wished you were up here with us! She sat on the right-hand side of Thomas, and on his left was Nanny Bell. I now looked again round the house, and in a private box nearly opposite to ours, but larger and lower down, I saw a pretty, delicate little girl, most elegantly dressed, whom I at once recognized as my little lady mamma, Flora. I was so glad to be unable to see the least sign of any scars from the fire. She was in the middle of this large box, leaning over. At one side, almost hidden behind a red curtain and her large silk cloak, sat Lady Flowerdale. Somehow I immediately thought of Mary Hope, to whom I had been taken by the dog Nep. I did

not see her, it is true; but while I was thinking of her, and looking down into the pit, I saw Mr Johnson, the portrait painter, peeling an orange. Looking at Mr Johnson, with gratitude for all he had done for me after my burning, it naturally made me think of how much more gratitude I owed to the celebrated Mr Sprat, who had made me, and I immediately looked up again towards the gallery where he sat. But happening at first to look too high, I caught sight, in the one-shilling gallery, of my little Italian mamma, Brigitta, and her brother Marco. They were laughing, talking, and cracking nuts.

Now we began to long for the Pantomime to begin. Presently we heard all manner of sounds going on behind the curtain—all manner of voices talking and calling, and buzzing and humming. The moving of boards, and hammering, and the placing of planks and beams, and pushing and pulling about of heavy things; and now and then through one side of the curtain we caught a glimpse of something so bright that went by, like tall flags on painted poles, and tops of spears, and parts of mantles of people's dresses; and once underneath the bottom of the dark green curtain, we saw run along a little pair of bright silver feet.

The sound of drums and trumpets was also heard to begin in a disorderly manner, and then stop suddenly, and end in a murmur of many voices, and a hurrying to and fro of many feet.

And now the band of musicians that played in the long orchestra beneath us, came thronging in, and seized upon all sorts of very great and very small instruments, and began blowing and twanging, and trying up and down, and backwards and forwards, and squeaking high and flourishing about, and rumbling and tumbling, and working very hard to get into order. Then they were quite silent. Then *tap ! tap !* went the fiddlestick of the leader of the orchestra, who sat upon his high stool—there was more silence than ever—and suddenly off they all went, all the instruments at once, and played away in a most wonderful manner—slow music, and quick music, and grand marches, and all sorts of dances, that made everybody's heart jump within and try to do whatever the music was doing.

The band ceased playing, and very slowly indeed the dark curtain began to be drawn up. As it went creeping up towards the high roof, we gradually saw a great field in winter, all white with snow, and the snow coming down. As the dark curtain went up and the snow came down, it seemed that the box we

were in was sinking downwards also. However, it did not.

The scene we looked upon was a very large field of snow, with shrubs in the front all covered with snow, and large trees at the side all covered with snow, and great woods at the back. The snow presently ceased to fall, and we saw ranges of hills behind the woods quite white like the rest. All the time the music continued to play something that was so slow, and cold, and soft, and melodious, and grand.

The music was changed to an ugly, broken hobbling harsh sound, and at the farthest end of the field we saw a strong-made, little old man, in a dark blue cloak, appear, and come down towards the white shrubs in front, just under us. His hat was the shape of an extinguisher, but with a broad brim. As he approached, we saw that he had a large blue nose, and very large uneven teeth, and blue goggle eyes! Ugh! how we all shivered, except Lydia's papa and mamma, who laughed and told us not to be frightened. The music stopped, and this ugly, strong Dwarf then repeated these words:

"The frosty air shall take them,
And the wintry wind shall shake them,
And frozen boughs shall rake them,

While rocks and ruins break them,—
And years shall always snip them,
While hours for ever trip them,
And constant trouble dip them,
Until Time come and clip them;
All this shall be done to destroy all their dances,
And drive from the world its delightful romances."

As the ugly, thick-limbed little Dwarf said this, he stamped one foot,—a loud wind was heard, and in a moment he went straight down through the earth, and was quite gone! At the same moment we heard a sweet voice singing in the air, which said—

"He thinks he makes what mortals see:
It seems so—but it shall not be."

Before we had time to recover ourselves, we saw that the whole scene of frost and snow was changing into a bright summer. The green leaves came out upon the trees—the sunbeams shot across the sky, and played upon the distant woods and hills—a warm, glowing colour came all over the scene—and while the music played the prettiest dance, we saw the spire of a village church slowly rise up among the trees at the back, and a troop of villagers, with wreaths and garlands of flowers, all came dancing in, and round and round.

And now came in a very pretty little village girl with her lover; and the dancers all surrounded them with their garlands, and they were all going to be very happy, when a cross-looking old man in an earth-coloured flannel gown, who was the father of the pretty little village girl, hobbled in and separated them,—and would not allow it,—and made signs that the young man was not rich enough to have his daughter. He made signs that the young man had no fields, and orchards, and dogs, and horses, and houses, and money, and these were the things that he thought most to be loved, and therefore that they made the best lover. So the young man having none of these, was driven away by the old father and two of his men with pitchforks. When, just as they were driving him out, a noise was heard as if a great many penny trumpets were blown. All the villagers made signs of seeing something wonderful coming. Then came the sound of one single penny trumpet, and immediately afterwards there entered, with a very consequential strut, a figure with a large round head and red cheeks, scarcely any body, and very thin grass-green legs, and carrying in both hands an immense brass trumpet, which, however, had only the sound of a very small penny one.

"I come," said he, "to herald the advance of

the King of Bubble Island,—and I am his chief trumpeter." Upon which he lifted up his immense brass trumpet, which said, "*Twee, te-twee, twee!*"

Now came in twenty more trumpeters like the first, all with large trumpets, blowing "*Twee! twee! twee!*" After them came marching in an army, all the soldiers having helmets made of great white turnips, with the green leaves nodding about for feathers, and carrying shields of black glass, in the middle of each of which was seen a bowl of white soap-suds and a pipe. These were followed by the King's Prime Minister and the other Wise Men of his court, all of them blowing bubbles, which rose into the air and looked most beautiful; and as fast as they burst, the Wise Men blew more, so that there were always a good many floating in the air. Each was attended by two valiant knights in glass armour of bottle-green, the one on the right bearing a bowl of soap-suds, and the one on the left carrying a supply of soap and fresh pipes. After these came dancing a great many golden Coins of the Realm, all with the same face, and all of them with thin spider's legs, and their hands in their pockets.

And now came the King himself! He had a large round head of glass, coloured with green and pink, and his face was coloured with green and pink,

and he wore a golden crown, with spikes like a dog's collar, which spouted up a great quantity of froth in the shape of feathers. His body was quite round, like his head, only very much larger. His hair was dark purple. He had a short mantle edged with fur like froth, and his legs were the colour of a blue-bottle fly spotted with gold. His walk and air were like all the pride of the earth put into one chemist's bottle! An immense blast of farthing trumpets announced his actual presence!

"Poor people!" exclaimed he, "villagers and people, and things!—ye have dared to harbour among you no less a gentleman than the Prince my son, the heir of all these Bubbles, who has caused us all these troubles,—but what my grief doubles, let me say, is the fact that he has run away, and our Royal Court doth mock———bless my soul! what young man is that in the brown frock?"

The moment he said this, the poor lover, who was just being driven out by the three pitchforks, began to run about and try to hide himself. The Prime Minister and the Wise Men instantly drew from their sides each a telescope, which they drew out to its full length, and began to point in all directions to examine the young man, crying out, "We think it is—we think it is—we think it is the

Prince!" The Prime Minister now jumped pick-a-back upon the back of the King's Physician, and pointed the telescope towards the feet of the young peasant, crying out, "Now I shall have him!" When the Physician, on whose back he was, heard this, he began to prance very much. The Prime Minister, whose observations through the telescope were much disturbed by this prancing, then jumped down and lay flat upon his stomach, pointing his glass towards the young man's face, and then called out, "I've got him. It *is* the Prince!" The moment the King heard his Prime Minister declare it to be actually his dear long-lost son, he rushed, as if mad with paternal feelings, towards the young man, and being unable to stop himself in time, he and the Prince together knocked down a cottage! It fell flat down, and they rolled amidst the ruins! The village girls extricated the Prince by the shoulders, and the Wise Men pulled out the King by the legs, drawing him along a good way on the ground, to be sure that he *was* extricated. Then the King immediately remembered how very angry he had been with his son for running away, and was going to knock him down with his golden sceptre, when the father of the pretty little village girl, that the Prince was in love with, ran up and received

the blow instead, which knocked him down upon his knees; but instead of getting up, he declared it was the greatest honour of his life to have been knocked down by the father of his daughter's lover, whom he now discovered to be such a great person, and to have so many fields, and bags of gold, and horses, and people, and soap-bubbles.

"Base clodpole!" said his Majesty, "is the Prince my son in love with your little hedge-flower of a daughter?"

Before he could say another word, the Prince himself ran up to the little peasant girl with open arms, crying out—"Yes, King of Bubbles, it is true."

"Then," said the King,—"Blow me!"

At the sound of these words, the most terrible that could be heard in the whole kingdom of Bubble Island, all the army uttered a howl, and the Prime Minister and other Wise Men rushed to their bowls of soap-suds, and filling the air with bubbles to try if their pipes were in the highest degree of perfection, they then advanced towards the King and applied their pipes to different parts of his body to blow him as he ordered. But suddenly was heard a great sound of wind and rain, and the sky got dark, and it began to snow; and while they were

all staring at the fast falling snow, the ugly, strong-limbed Dwarf, with the blue nose and goggle eyes, came walking down among them and said—

"I will befriend thee, King of Bubbles,
And all thy foes I'll fill with troubles:
Come frost and snow! and cover all we see,
And change the face of life's reality!"

At these words there began to descend a number of dark, heavy clouds, at the same time that a mist rose up from the earth, till the clouds and the mist met, and out of the middle came a great troop of the Spirits of the Frost and Snow, all glistening in white snow and icicles, with branches covered with snow and icicles in their hands, and they all sang this chorus:—

"We will the face of Nature change,
And make its pleasant places strange,
Covering all life with icy wing,
As thou may'st order, Bubble King."

"Very good," said the King; "I'm much obliged to you, Mr Blue-nosed Dwarf, and to all you ladies and gentlemen with frosty countenances. Now then, at once, I will thank you to cover the village, where all these people live, with snow; to turn that peasant girl, whom my son is so mad and stupid as to be in

love with, into a large icicle, and make the Prince a man of snow looking at her.

The Spirits of the Frost instantly seized upon the Prince and the little peasant girl, when suddenly a rosy light appeared in the middle of the dark clouds, which got brighter and brighter, and sent out rays of an orange colour, and then rays also of bright purple. Then the orange began to get golden, and the purple to turn to bright violet; and then in the middle of all there opened out a bright light, and we saw a wheel of golden fire slowly turning round, and in the centre of it stood a little child, who seemed to be dressed in bright silver gossamer, with beautiful auburn hair, and a silver wand in her hand, and a bright violet star upon her forehead; and the little voice called out,—

"Spirits of the Frost! I charge ye sing again
More truly,—mixing pleasure with the pain."

Then the Spirits of the Frost sang these words,—

"We will the face of Nature change,
And make the truest things look strange;
But Nature's heart will ever be
Deep beyond Fate's tyranny,
And from King Bubble's surface free."

Then said the Dwarf,—

"But change is mine, and strife and war,—"

Then replied the Child,—

"Take them—but work within my law."

The clouds now closed in front of the bright Child-spirit to the sound of soft music, till each cloud became of a dull leaden colour as before. Presently came a loud sound of instruments from behind the clouds, and a large silver arrow was seen to fly straight towards the young Prince. It struck him, and he instantly turned into Harlequin, in a dress of bright gold and silver and red and blue, and a black mask! Again the sound of a clang of instrumeuts was heard behind the clouds, and out dropped a bag of money upon the head of the village girl's father, which knocked him down, and when he got up he was poor old Pantaloon, with a goat's beard, and a pig-tail, and a short red mantle, and a stick. Again a clang of instruments was heard, and a great heavy stone was seen to fly out of the cloud straight at the glass head of his Majesty, the King of Bubble Island, which it struck, and,—with a sound like the breaking of six dozen of soda-water bottles,—his head flew into a million of pieces, and up in its place rose the head of the Clown, with his mouth wide open!—at the same time all the Royal robes of the King flew up into the air, where they were blown about in all directions, till they were at last blown quite away, and there was the Clown, in his ridiculous red and white patch-work dress! Once more was heard the clang of instruments behind the

clouds, and out of the clouds flew a beautiful bouquet of flowers, which fell upon the head of the little peasant girl, who instantly turned into the prettiest Columbine that ever was seen in all the world. She was like the brightest silver-footed fairy, and yet at the same time she was such a little dear sweetheart.

But what *do* you think happened at this moment? Nobody would ever guess. It was this. My mamma Lydia was in such excessive delight that she sank back with her arms thrown up, and totally forgetting me, I slipped over the edge of the box and fell upon the stage, close to the little silver feet of Columbine. My mamma did not know I had fallen. Columbine had no idea where I came from; so the next time she passed the spot where I lay, she caught me up, and ran with me to her room behind the scenes.

CHAPTER XVII.

CONCLUSION.

The moment Columbine entered her room she held me up to a good-natured old lady, who was dressing herself like a scaly green dragon for the last scene, and cried out, "Here's a pretty doll I have just found on the stage!"

"Where *did* you get it?" said the good-natured old lady, going to a looking-glass to fit on the dragon's head.

"Oh, grandmother," said Columbine, "I've no time to tell you now, as I have to dance a hornpipe in the next scene. Take care of her." Saying which, away ran the pretty Columbine.

As soon as the old lady had tied the strings of the dragon's head under her chin, so that her face could look through the large red throat and open mouth of the dragon, she held her head on one side before the glass and said, "There! I think that does very nicely." She then folded me up in a handkerchief, and placed me with their bonnets and shawls.

Here I lay, hearing all sorts of noises of trumpets and drums, and singing and dancing, and tumbling about, and calling out, and laughing, and fireworks, and the great rolling of many wheels, and loud sounds of distant applause from the audience. When all was over I was taken home by the Columbine and her grandmother. It was a wet night, and they walked through the rain in shawls and clogs, and holding up a great umbrella with three slits in the top. They lived in the back parlour of a small green-grocer's, near Covent garden. The bed and the rest of the furniture were very humble, the hangings of the bed being of grey draft-board pattern, and the coverlid of the bed of patchwork; but all looking as clean as it was poor.

I now saw that the pleasant old grandmother, who had acted the green dragon, was dressed all

in brown, even with a brown bonnet and brown stockings; the umbrella was brown too. Columbine was dressed in a high frock of grey checked gingham, but very neatly made, and she wore a small straw cottage bonnet. Under one arm, however, she had a bundle from which shining things peeped out, and she took a pair of silver slippers out of her pocket, folded them up in a bit of newspaper, and placed them in a little band-box, into which I peeped and saw it was full of precious things. Then down they sat to a supper of boiled eggs, followed by bread and cheese and porter, and endive and beet-root, and then they laughed and talked about the pantomime, and looked at me and examined my gold bracelet; and then went to bed.

I was placed away very carefully the next morning, as the pretty little Columbine had too much to do to attend to me. I was therefore, during all the time of the pantomime, left quite alone. I, however, employed my time by thinking very much over my past life, and going over everything in my own mind, from the day of my birth in the room of the celebrated Mr Sprat, down to the present time.

When the Christmas pantomime was over in London, the little Columbine and her grandmother went into the country, to act at a small theatre there, and they took me with them. After the performances had gone on for three weeks Columbine had a benefit night. The first piece was the tragedy of "Douglas," and, as no green dragon was wanted in it, the grandmother acted Lady Randolph. The little Columbine acted Norval, with his bow and quiver; she had taken the part, I suppose, on account of its resemblance to Cupid.

Near the town in which the theatre was, there stood a large country mansion, called Ashbourn Hall, and the lady of this mansion was very kind, and took so many tickets for Columbine's benefit that her party filled all the three front boxes.

The next morning the pretty little Columbine took me out of the drawer in which I was lying in the dark, and feeling very dull. I saw that she looked smiling and happy, and was nicely dressed in a neatly made blue frock with white sprigs on it, and a new bonnet. "Come with me, Maria Poppet," said she, "and we shall see if we can-

not give them a little pleasure in return for all their kindness;"—so she wrapped me up in silver paper, all but my head. I was still dressed in my pretty muslin frock with pink roses. Away she walked with me in her hand, to Ashbourn Hall.

First we came up to the high iron gates, and inside I could see a very smooth green lawn, with fine spreading trees about it, and broad gravel walks, and great round evergreens, and numbers of gay flowers, and a round fish pond with a fountain in the middle, and beautiful water lilies growing in it. Columbine rang the bell, and a good-natured looking, fat old man-servant opened the gate, and smiled when he saw her, as if he remembered her. She said she wished to see Mrs Ashbourn, and he asked her to walk in. We went up the gravel walk, and there was a flight of very white stone steps up to the door, with large flower pots on them; and when we got in there was a square lobby with a billiard table, and large pictures on the walls; and then the servant threw open a door and shewed us into a drawing-room. Oh, it was such a beautiful room! There was a large bright sparkling fire, and a large bay window

opposite, with a most lovely view out of it, and flower-stands full of geraniums and other flowers in it, and bright crimson curtains, and a bright carpet, and numbers of sofas and arm-chairs, and ottomans, and tables with crimson cloths on them, with large china jars of flowers, and Christmas annuals, and doll's books, and scent bottles, and all manner of pretty things; and bookcases, and a piano, and harp, and guitar, and there was such a sweet scent in the room; and there was a German piping bullfinch, who was singing a sweet waltz, and a large white dog lying asleep on the rug, who, when we came in, raised his head. But what I liked best of all was the sight of a pretty, gentle-looking little girl, about seven years old, who sat on a sofa reading to a handsome, kind-looking lady.

The lady, who was Mrs Ashbourn, rose up and received the little Columbine very kindly, and the little girl came forward and smiled, and held out her hand to her, and they made her sit down by them. Then little Columbine said in the prettiest manner, "I am come, ma'am, to thank you for your kindness to me, and to ask you to allow this young lady to accept of a doll from me."

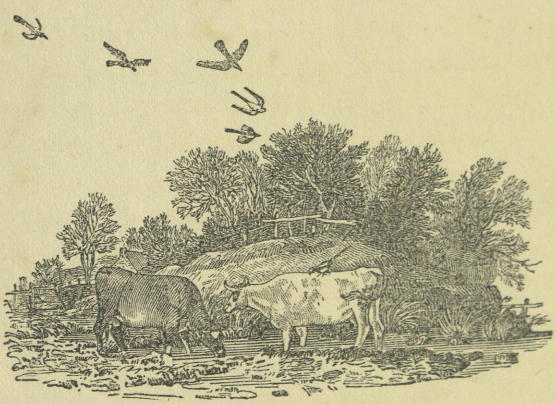
Mrs Ashbourn thanked her, and said

girl would be delighted to have such a pretty doll; and so I was placed in the soft little hands of my present dear mamma, Lucy Ashbourn; and then after a few minutes more talking, in which a great many flattering things were said of me, pretty little Columbine took leave, and left me in the house where I now am.

Here I feel that I am settled for life. Only yesterday, my mamma, as she was sitting on her papa's knee, told him that when she grew too old to play with me she would give me to her little sister. She takes the greatest care of me. Everything is made for me just like hers. I have morning dresses, afternoon dresses, and night clothes, and a little chest of drawers to keep my things in. I have a little bed, with white curtains and nice blankets and sheets, in which my mamma lays me every night, after undressing me and putting on my nightgown and nightcap; and in the morning she makes believe to wash me all over, and brushes my hair, and dresses me. When I go out I have a bonnet and cloak put on, and I am always dressed for dinner, and have my hair done. I have also had the happiness to become acquainted with another doll, who lives in a country-house near ours. At dif-

ferent times, when we have been sitting in the garden while our mammas played about, she has told me the history of her life, and I hope at a future time that these 'Memoirs of a Country Doll' will be made public, as mine have been.

I now take an affectionate leave of my readers, who may perhaps hear of me again, when the Country Doll relates her history.



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